Class BV4005

Book .I6

THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY;

OR

EXCITEMENT AND DIRECTION

IN

MINISTERIAL DUTIES,

EXTRACTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

By WILLIAM INNES,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR WAUGH AND INNES;

M. OGLE, GLASGOW; R. M. TIMS, DUBLIN; JAMES DUNCAN, JAMES NISBET, AND FRANCIS WESTLEY, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXIV.

BV4005
.I6

EXCHANGE
UNIV. of WESTERN ONT. LIBRARY
SEPT 24, 1938

PRINTED BY A. BALFOUR AND CO.

HR 12 N 36

CONTENTS.

	Page
REV. RICHARD BAXTER . . .	1
REV. DR. ISAAC WATTS	91
REV. JOSEPH ALLEINE	161
REV. DR. WITHERSPOON . . .	175
REV. DR. ERSKINE	199
REV. HENRY MARTYN	235
REV. DAVID BRAINERD	279
REV. RICHARD CECIL	297
REV. ROBERT HALL	323
APPENDIX	345

PREFACE.

My design in selecting and arranging the following Extracts may be very shortly expressed. It has been TO FURNISH A VOLUME AS FULL OF USEFUL MATTER AS POSSIBLE :— A VOLUME WHICH MAY LIE WITH ADVANTAGE ON THE TABLE OF EVERY MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND INTO WHICH HE CANNOT EVEN OCCASIONALLY LOOK WITHOUT FINDING SOME USEFUL HINT, EITHER IN THE WAY OF DIRECTION OR EXCITEMENT IN THE IMPORTANT WORK IN WHICH HE IS ENGAGED.

The plan of such a work was suggested to me some time ago by an aged and venerable servant of Christ, who considered such a volume rather a desideratum in a Minister's

library. Since I began to print these Selections, I have heard of some other publications of a similar nature, but not having seen them I do not know how far they coincide with that now presented to the reader. Many of the Extracts, however, which appear in the following pages, and these not the least valuable, must be different from what the compilations referred to, contain, as they were published before some of the authors whose names are found in this volume were known.

There are indeed two small publications which I have read with much pleasure, addressed to Students of Theology and young Ministers, written by my esteemed friend, the Rev. Henry Foster Burder. The one is entitled "Mental Discipline, or Hints on the Cultivation of Intellectual Habits;" and the other—"Mental Discipline, or Hints on the Cultivation of Moral Habits." Both of these I have great satisfaction in recommending to the careful perusal of every

Minister of the Gospel; they are replete with useful reflection, the result of much accurate observation, and stated in a very condensed, yet very perspicuous manner. These volumes, however, though containing several quotations, are original works, and by no means a professed compilation like that which the following pages contain.

The slightest glance at the names of those authors from whose writings the following Selections are taken, must convince every one how much their observations are entitled to the serious regard of all who are engaged in the arduous and important work of the Christian Ministry. This volume, it is conceived, will be found particularly useful to those who are only entering on this service, and who thus need direction in the discharge of the duties of it. But let it not be supposed it is fitted to be of use to them alone. Even the Minister whose knowledge is most extensive and whose observation is most matured, must be sensible that

if he does not need direction in duty, he constantly requires excitement to the vigorous and persevering discharge of it. Considerations then which are calculated to furnish such an excitement in a service, the full importance of which we can never completely estimate while on earth, but which can only be known when seen in the light of eternity, must at all times be highly valuable; and such considerations I hesitate not to say, the following Extracts abundantly present.

I shall only here add, that while the course of reading I have pursued in collecting the materials of this publication has furnished me with many more than could be inserted; if it shall appear that these are generally acceptable, I may afterwards add another volume of Extracts not less interesting than those which are here introduced.

WILLIAM INNES.

EDINBURGH,
18*th August* 1824.

EXTRACTS

FROM

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE first extracts, here introduced, are taken from Baxter's Gildas Salvianus, or Reformed Pastor. In selecting these, I have preferred the original work to any abridgment of it, as there is a vigour and raciness in this author's own language, even amidst all the negligences that occur in it, which, to most readers, will be far more acceptable than if it should be in any considerable degree changed, and the same sentiments should be clothed in a more modern dress. The only alterations I have ventured to make, are the occasional change of an antiquated word, which may either be now obsolete, or the signification of which may be now different; and sometimes a transposition of a word or clause, to render the author's meaning more obvious. But no such alteration,

I trust, will be found as shall tend in any measure to take off the point of Mr. Baxter's own powerful and impressive style.

Though it would indicate a high degree of presumption to recommend such a writer as Richard Baxter, yet I cannot forbear embracing the opportunity of prefacing these extracts with the following very just and eloquent account of this author, as well as others of his day, which has just appeared in a preface to a new edition of the Saints' Rest, from the pen of Thomas Erskine, Esq.* Speaking of Baxter, and other writers of the same period, he remarks,—"They speak with the solemn dignity of martyrs. They seem to feel the importance of their theme, and the perpetual presence of him who is the great subject of it. There are only two things they seem to consider as realities,—the favour of God, and the enmity of God; and only two parties in the universe to choose between,—the party of God, and the party of his adversaries. Hence that noble and heroic tone which marks their lives and their writings. They had chosen their side, and they knew it was worthy of all they could do or suffer for it.

"They were born in the midst of conflicts, civil and religious; and as they grew up, their ears heard no other sounds than those of defiance and controversy. Thus life was to them, in fact and

* Author of "Remarks on the Internal Evidence of Revealed Religion," and "An Essay on Faith."

reality, that warfare which is to many of us only its rhetorical emblem. The agitated state of surrounding circumstances gave them continual proof of the instability of all things temporal, and inculcated on them the necessity of seeking a happiness which might be independent of external things. They thus practically learned the vanity and the nothingness of life, except in its relation to eternity; and they declared to their fellow-creatures the mysteries of the kingdom of God with the tone of men who knew that the lightest word they spoke outweighed, in the balance of reason as well as of the sanctuary, the value of all earth's plans and politics and interests. They were upon high and firm ground. They stood in the midst of that tempestuous ocean, secure on the Rock of Ages; and as they uttered to those around them their invitations, or remonstrances, or consolations, they thought not of the tastes, but of the necessities of men—they thought only of the difference of being lost and being saved, and they cried aloud and spared not."——

The text Mr. Baxter has chosen, as the ground of his observations, in that very arousing work from which our first quotations are selected, is Acts xx. 28. " Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Under the first clause, his first observations relate to

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL RELIGION—OF MINISTERIAL GIFTS—AND OF A CONSISTENT EXAMPLE.

"Take heed to yourselves lest you should be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual workings of that gospel which you preach, and lest while you proclaim the necessity of a Saviour to the world, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss an interest in him, and his saving benefits. Take heed to yourselves lest you perish while you call upon others to take heed of perishing, and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare their food. Many a man hath warned others that they come not to that place of torment which they yet hasted to themselves. Many a preacher is now in misery that hath an hundred times called upon their hearers to use their utmost care and diligence to escape it. Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others, while they refused it themselves; and for telling others those truths which they neglected and abused? Believe it, brethren; God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher, but because he was a justified and sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his master's work. Take heed, therefore, to yourselves first, that you be that which you persuade your hearers to be, and believe that which you per-

suade them daily to believe; and have heartily entertained that Christ, and that Spirit, which you offer to others.

" Again, take heed to yourselves lest you live in those actual sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which you daily condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and when you have done, dishonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet contemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach his laws, and wilfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? If it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? If it be not, why do you tell men it is so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? If they be false, why do you trouble men needlessly with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you know the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, and yet will you do them? Rom. i. 32. Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? Rom. ii. 21—23. What! shall the same tongue speak evil that speaketh against evil? Shall it censure, and slander, and secretly backbite, that cries down

these, and the like in others? Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves; "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage," 2 Pet. ii. 19. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness," Rom. vi. 16. It is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.

"Take heed also to yourselves that you be not unfit for the great employments that you have undertaken. He must not be himself a babe in knowledge that will teach men all those mysterious things that are to be known in order to salvation. Oh! what qualifications are necessary for that man that hath such a charge upon him as we have! How many difficulties in divinity to be opened; yea, about the very fundamental truths that must needs be known! How many obscure texts of Scripture to be expounded! How many duties to be done, wherein ourselves or others may miscarry, if, in the matter, and end, and manner, and circumstances, they be not well informed! How many sins to be avoided, which, without understanding and foresight, cannot be done! How many sly and subtle temptations must we open to our people's eyes, that they may escape them! How many weighty,

and yet intricate cases of conscience, have we almost daily to resolve! Can so much work, and such work as this, be done by raw unqualified men? O what strong holds have we to batter, and how many of them! What subtle, and diligent, and obstinate resistance must we expect at every heart we deal with! Prejudice hath blocked up our way; we can scarcely procure a patient hearing. They think ill of what we say while we are speaking it. We cannot make a breach in their groundless hopes, and carnal peace, but they have twenty shifts, and seeming reasons to make it up again, and twenty enemies that are seeming friends are ready to help them. We dispute not with them upon equal terms.——

"We dispute the case against men's wills and sensual passions, as much as against their understandings; and these have neither reason nor ears. Their best arguments are, 'I will not believe you nor all the preachers in the world in such things: I will not change my mind or life: I will not leave off my sins: I will never be so precise, come of it what will.' We have not one, but multitudes of raging passions and contradictory enemies to dispute against at once, whenever we go about the conversion of a sinner; as if a man were to dispute in a fair, or a tumult, or in the midst of a violent crowd of scolds. What equal dealings and what success were here to be

expected? Why, such is our work, and yet a work that must be done.

"O, dear brethren! what men should we be in skilful resolution and unwearied diligence, that have all this to do? Did Paul cry, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' and shall we be proud, or careless, or lazy, as if *we* were sufficient? As Peter saith to every Christian, in consideration of our apparent change, 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' so may I say to every minister, Seeing all these things to lie upon our hands, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy endeavours and resolutions for our work? This is not a burden for the shoulders of a child. What skill doth every part of our work require; and of how much moment is every part? To preach a sermon is, I think, not the hardest part; and yet what skill is necessary to make plain the truth, to convince the hearers, to let in irresistible light into their consciences, to keep it there, and to drive all home; to screw the truth into their minds, and to work Christ into their affections; to meet with every objection that gainsays, and clearly to resolve it; to drive sinners to a stand, and to make them see that there is no hope, but that they must unavoidably be converted or condemned: and to do all this so for language and manner as becomes our work, and yet as is suitable to the capacities of our hearers: this,

and a great deal more, that should be done in every sermon, should surely be done with a great deal of holy zeal.

" So great a God, whose message we deliver, should be honoured by our delivery of it. It is a lamentable case, that in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so weakly, so unhandsomely, so imprudently, or so slightly, that the whole business should miscarry in our hands and God be dishonoured, and our work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened than converted, and all this, much through our weakness or neglect. How many a time have carnal hearers gone away jeering home at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the preacher ! How many sleep under us, because our hearts are sleepy, and we bring not with us so much zeal as to awaken them !

" Moreover, what skill is necessary to defend the truth against gainsayers, and to deal with disputing cavillers according to their several modes and cases? And if we fail through weakness, how will they insult? That is indeed the smallest matter; but who knows how many weak ones may be perverted by this success, to their own undoing, and the trouble of the church?

" What skill is necessary to deal with one poor ignorant soul for their conversion? O, brethren ! do you not shrink and tremble under a sense of

all this work? Will a common measure of holy skill and ability, of prudence and other qualifications, serve for such a task as this?

"Moreover, take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling blocks before the blind as may be the occasion of their ruin: lest you unsay with your lives that which you say with your tongues; and this be the greatest hindrance of the success of your own labours. It much hindereth our work when other men are contradicting all the week to poor people in private that which we have been speaking to them from the Word of God in public, because we cannot be at hand to manifest their folly. But it will much more hinder it if we contradict ourselves; and if your actions give your tongue the lie, and if you build up one hour or two with your mouths, and all the time pull down with your hands. This is the way to make men think that the word of God is but an idle tale, and to make preaching seem no better than prating. He that *means* as he speaks will surely *do* as he speaks. One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all you have been doing. Tell me, brethren in the fear of God, do you regard the success of your labours or do you not? Do you long to see it upon the souls of your hearers? If you do not, what do you preach for? What

do you study for? and what do you call yourselves ministers of Christ for? But if you do, then sure you cannot find it in your heart to mar your work for a thing of nought. What! do you regard the success of your labours, and yet will you not part with a little to the poor, not put up with an injury or a foul word, not stoop to the meanest, not forbear your passionate or lordly carriage, no, not for the winning of souls, and the attaining the end of all your labours? You much regard success indeed that will sell it at so cheap a rate, or will not do so small a matter to attain it!

"It is a palpable error in those ministers that make such a disproportion between their preaching and living, that they should study to preach exactly, and study little or not at all to *live* exactly. All the week long is little enough to study how to speak two hours, and yet one hour seems too much to study how to live all the week. They are loath to misplace a word in their sermons, or to be guilty of any notable infirmity, (and I blame them not, for the matter is holy and of weight,) but they make nothing of misplacing of affections, words, and actions, in the course of their lives. O! how cautiously have I heard some men preach, and how carelessly have I seen them live.

"Certainly, brethren, we have very great cause to take heed what we *do* as well as what we *say*, if

we will be the servants of Christ. As our people must be doers of the word and not hearers only, so we must be doers and not speakers only, lest we be deceivers of our own selves. A practical doctrine must be practically preached. We must study as hard how to live well as how to preach well. We must think, and think again, how to compose our lives as may most tend to men's salvation, as well as our sermons. When you are studying what to say to them, I know these are your thoughts, (or else they are nought and to no purpose,) how shall I get within them, or what shall I say that is likely most effectually to convince them, and to convert them, and to tend to their salvation? And should you not as diligently bethink yourselves, how shall I live, and what shall I say and do, and how shall I dispose of all that I have, as may most probably tend to the saving of men's souls? Brethren, if saving of souls be your end, you will certainly intend it as well *out* of the pulpit as *in* it. If it be your end you will live for it, and contribute all your endeavours to obtain it. And if you do so, you will as well ask concerning the money in your purse as the words in your mouth: Which way shall I lay it out for the greatest good, especially to men's souls? O! that this were your daily study how to use your wealth, your friends, and all you have for God, as well as your tongues; and then should we see that fruit of your labours

which is never else likely to be seen. If you intend the end of the ministry in the pulpit only, then it seems you take yourselves for ministers no longer than you are there; and then I think you are unworthy to be esteemed such at all."

The author then subjoins the following reasons as motives to attend to the duty above enjoined.

"Consider you have a heaven to win or lose yourselves, and souls that must be happy or miserable for ever; and, therefore, it concerneth you to begin at home and to take heed to yourselves as well as to others. Preaching may well succeed to the salvation of others without the holiness of your own hearts or lives. It is possible, at least, though less usual; but it is impossible that mere preaching should serve to save yourselves.—'Many shall say in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' Matt. vii. 22, who shall be answered with—I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity. O Sirs, how many have preached Christ, and perished for want of a saving interest in him. How many that are now in hell have told their people of the torments of hell, and warned them to avoid them. How many have preached the wrath of God against sinners that are now feeling it. O what sadder case can there be in the world than for a man that made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and to help others to attain it, yet after all to be himself shut out. Alas!

that ever we should have so many books in our libraries that tell us the way to heaven, that we should spend so many years in reading these books and studying the doctrine of eternal life, and after all this to miss of it. That ever we should study and preach so many sermons of salvation and yet fall short of it; so many sermons of damnation and yet fall into it; and all because we preached so many sermons of Christ while we neglected him—of the spirit while we resisted it —of faith while we did not heartily believe—of repentance and conversion while we continued in the state of flesh and sin, and of a heavenly life while we remained carnal and earthly ourselves. If we will be divines only in tongue and title, and have not the divine image upon our souls, nor give up ourselves to the divine honour and will, no wonder if we be separated from the divine presence, and denied the fruition of God for ever.

"Again, take heed to yourselves, for you have a depraved nature and sinful inclinations as well as others.

"Take heed to yourselves, because such great works as ours do put men on great use and trial of their graces, and they have greater temptations than many other men.

"Take heed to yourselves, because the tempter will make his sharpest onset upon you. If you be the leaders against him, he will spare you no

farther than God restraineth him. O what a conquest will he think he has got if he can make a minister lazy and unfaithful; if he can tempt a minister into covetousness or scandal.

" Take heed to yourselves, because there are many eyes upon you; and, therefore, there will be many observers of your falls.

" Take heed to yourselves, for your sins have more heinous aggravations than those of other men.

" Take heed to yourselves, for the honour of your Lord and Master and of his holy truth and ways doth lie more heavy upon you than on other men.

" Take heed to yourselves, for the souls of your hearers and the success of all your labours do very much depend upon it.

" It is not a very likely thing that the people will regard much the doctrine of those men who they see do not live as they preach. They will think that a preacher doth not *mean* as he speaks if he do not *act* as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself. If a man bid you run for your lives because a bear or an enemy is at your backs, and yet do not mend his pace in the same way, you will be tempted to think that he is but in jest, and that there is really no such danger as he pretends. When preachers tell people of the necessity of holiness, and that without it no man shall see the

Lord, and yet remain unholy themselves, the people will think they do but talk to pass away the hour, and because they must say something for their money, and that all these are but words of course. Long enough may you lift up your voice against sin before men will believe that there is any such harm or danger in it as you talk of, as long as they see the same man that reproacheth it put it in his bosom and make it his delight.

"Yes, you who contradict your preaching by your lives do worse than all this, for you teach men to think ill of others that are better. How many a faithful minister and private Christian is hated and reproached for the sake of such as you. What, say the people to them,—'You are so precise, and tell us so much of sin, and danger, and duty, and make such a stir about these matters; when such and such a minister, that is as great a scholar as you, and as good a preacher too, will be merry and jest with us, and let us alone, and never trouble themselves or us with such discourse. These busy fellows can never be quiet, but make more ado than needs: and love to frighten men with talk about damnation, when sober, learned, and peaceable divines can be quiet and live with us like other men.' This is the very thought and talk of people which your negligence doth occasion. They will give you leave to preach against their sins as much as you will,

and talk as much for godliness in the pulpit, so you will but let them alone afterwards, and be friendly and merry with them when you have done, and talk as they do, and live as they, and be indifferent with them in your conscience and conversation. For they take the pulpit to be but a stage, a place where preachers must shew themselves, and play their parts; where you have liberty to say what you list for an hour, and what you say they much regard not, if you shew them not by saying personally to their faces that you were in good earnest, and that you did indeed mean it for *them*. Is that man likely therefore to do much good, or fit to be a minister of Christ, that will speak for him for an hour, and by his life will preach against him all the week besides, and thus give his public words the lie by his conduct?"

Under the second general division in the text, "Take heed to all the flock," we have the following animated appeals and useful suggestions:

MINISTERIAL ADDRESSES TO BE SUITED TO THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE HEARERS.

"It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation, wherein, if they should die, they are immediately lost, that methinks we should not be able to let them alone, either in public or private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess I

am forced frequently to neglect that which should tend to the farther increase of knowledge in the godly, and may be called stronger meat, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who is able to talk of controversies, or nice unnecessary points, yea, or truths of a lower degree of necessity, how excellent soever, while he seeth a company of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before his face, that must be changed or damned? Methinks I even see them entering upon their final woe! Methinks I even hear them crying out for help, and speediest help. Their misery speaks the louder, because they have not hearts to see or ask for help themselves. Many a time have I known that I had some hearers of higher fancies, that looked for rarities, and were addicted to despise the minister if he told them not somewhat more than ordinary; and yet I could not find in my heart to turn from the observation of the necessities of the impenitent, for the humouring of these; nor to leave speaking to the apparently miserable for their salvation, to speak to such novelists for the tickling of their ears; no, nor so much as otherwise should be done to the weak, for their confirmation and increase in grace. Methinks, as Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he saw the Athenians so addicted to idolatry, Acts xvii. 16, so it should cast us into one of his paroxysms, to see so many men in great probability of being everlastingly undone; and if by faith we did indeed look upon

them as within a step of hell, it should more effectually untie our tongues, than they tell us that Crœsus' danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go to hell for want of speaking to him, doth set less by souls than the Redeemer of souls did, and less by his neighbour than rational charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy. O therefore, brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable. Whatever you pass over, forget not poor souls that are under the condemnation and curse of the law, and may look every hour for the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. O call after the impenitent, and ply this great work of converting souls, whatever else you leave undone.

" Another part of the ministerial work is about those that are fallen under some great temptation. Much of our assistance is needful to our people in such a case; and therefore, every minister should be a man that hath much insight into the tempter's wiles. We should know the great variety of them, and the cunning craft of all Satan's instruments that lie in wait to deceive, and the methods and devices of the grand deceiver. Some of our people lie under temptations to error and heresy, especially the young, unsettled, and most self-conceited; and those that are most conversant or familiar with seducers. Young, raw, ungrounded Christians are commonly of their mind that have most interest in their esteem, and most opportunity of familiar talk to draw them

into their way. And as they are tinder, so deceivers want not the sparks of zeal to set them on a flame. A zeal for errors and opinions of our own is natural, and easily kindled and kept alive; but it is far otherwise with the spiritual zeal for God. O what a deal of holy prudence and industry is necessary in a pastor to preserve the flock from being tainted with heresies, and falling into noxious conceits and practices, and especially to keep them in unity and concord, and hinder the rising or increase of divisions!

"Others lie under a temptation to worldliness, and others to gluttony or drunkenness, and others to lust; some to one sin, and some to another. A faithful pastor should therefore have his eye upon them all, and labour to be acquainted with their natural temperament, and also with their occasions and affairs in the world, and the company that they live or converse with, that so he may know where their temptations lie, and then speedily, prudently, and diligently to help them.

"Another part of our work is to comfort the disconsolate, and to settle the peace of our people's souls, and that on sure and lasting grounds. To which end, the quality of the complainants, and the course of their lives, had need to be known; for all must not have the like consolations that have the like complaints.

"The rest of our ministerial work is upon those that are yet strong; for they also have need

of our assistance; partly to prevent their temptations and declinings, and preserve the grace they have; partly to help them for a further progress and increase, and partly to direct them in the improving of their strength for the service of Christ, and the assistance of their brethren. As also to encourage them, especially the aged, the tempted, and afflicted, to hold on, and to persevere, that they may attain the crown."

The following useful observations relate to

THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PUBLIC DUTY OF A MINISTER.

"One part of our work, and the most excellent, because it tendeth to work on many, is the public preaching of the word;—a work that requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of a congregation, and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of our Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the ignorant may understand us, and so seriously that the deadest hearts may feel us, and so convincingly that the contradicting cavillers may be silenced.

"Another part of the ministerial work is to have a special care and oversight of each member

of the flock. The parts whereof are these that follow:

"We must labour to be acquainted with the state of all our people as fully as we can; both to know the persons, and their inclinations and conversations; to know what are the sins that they are most in danger of, and what duties they neglect for the matter or manner, and what temptations they are most liable to. For if we know not the temperament or disease, we are like to prove but unsuccessful physicians.

"We must use all the means we can to instruct the ignorant in the matters of their salvation, by our own most plain familiar words, by giving or lending, or otherwise helping them to books that are fit for them.

"As many have no just impression of the office of the ministry, and their own necessity and duty therein, it belongeth to us to acquaint them therewith, and to press them publicly to come to us for advice, in such cases of great concernment to their souls. We must not only be willing to take the trouble, but draw it upon ourselves by inviting them hereto. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring our people to this! and doubtless much might be done in it, if we did our duties. How few have I ever heard that heartily pressed their people to their duty in this! A sad case that people's souls should be so injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so

great a duty, and ministers scarce ever tell them of it, and awaken them to it! Were they but duly sensible of the need and weight of this, you should have them more frequently knocking at your doors, and open their cases to you, and making their sad complaints and begging your advice. I beseech you put them more on this for the future, and perform it carefully when they seek your help. To this end it is very necessary that we be acquainted with practical cases, and especially that we be acquainted with the nature of true grace, and able to assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question that concerns their everlasting life or death. One word of seasonable prudent advice given by a minister to persons in necessity, hath done that good that many sermons would not have done.

"Alas! how few know how to deal with an ignorant worldly man for his salvation! To get within him and win upon him, and suit all speeches to men's several conditions and tempers; to choose the meetest subjects, and follow them with the holy mixture of seriousness, and terror, and love, and meekness, and evangelical allurements! O, who is fit for such a thing! I profess seriously, it seems to me (by experience) as hard a matter to confer aright with such a carnal person in order to his change, as to preach such sermons as ordinarily we do, if not much more. All these difficulties in ourselves should awaken us to resolu-

tions, preparation and diligence, that we be not overcome by them, and hindered from or in the work.

" We must also have a special eye upon families to see that they be well ordered, and the duties of each relation performed. The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of church and state, dependeth much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we undo all.

" Another part of our oversight lieth in visiting the sick, and helping them to prepare either for a fruitful life or a happy death: though this be the business of all our life and theirs, yet doth it at such a season require extraordinary care both of them and us. When time is almost gone and they must be now or never reconciled to God and possessed of his grace, O how doth it concern them to redeem those hours, and lay hold upon eternal life! and when we see that we are like to have but a few days' or hours' time more to speak to them in order to their endless state. What man that is not an infidel, or a block, would not be with them, and do all that he can for their salvation in that short space? Will it not awaken us to compassion to look upon a languishing man, and to think that within a few days his soul will be in heaven or hell? Surely it will much try the faith and seriousness of ministers or others to be about dying men: and they will have much

opportunity to discern whether they are themselves in good earnest about the matters of the life to come. So great is the change that is made by death, that it should awaken us to the greatest sensibility to see a man so near it, and should provoke us in the deepest pangs of compassion, to do the office of inferior angels for the soul before it is departed from the flesh, that it may be ready for the convoy of superior angels, to transmit it to the prepared glory when it is removed from sin and misery. When a man is almost at his journey's end, and the next step puts him into heaven or hell, it is time for us to help him, if we can, while there is hope."

In visiting the sick attend to the following hints.

" Delay not till strength and understanding be gone, and the time so short that you scarce know what to do; but go to them as soon as you hear they are sick, whether they send for you or not.

" When the time is so short that there is no opportunity to endeavour the change of their hearts in that distinct way, as is usual with others, nor to press truths upon them in such order, and stay the working of it by degrees; we must therefore be sure to ply the main, and dwell upon those truths which must do the great work: shewing them the certainty and glory of the life to come, and the way by which it was purchased for us, and the great sin and folly of their neglect-

ing it in time of health; but yet the possibility that remaineth of obtaining it, if they but yet close with it heartily as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus as the way thereto.

" If they do recover, be sure to remind them of their promises. Go to them purposely to set it home, and reduce them into performance. And whenever after you see them remiss, go to them then, and remind them what they formerly said. And because it is of such use to them that recover, (and hath been the means of the conversion of many a soul,) it is very necessary that you go to them whose sickness is not mortal, as well as to them that are nearer death: that so we may have some advantage to move them to repentance, and engage them to newness of life; and may afterward have this to plead against their sins.

"Another part of our ministerial oversight consisteth in the right comforting the consciences of the troubled, and settling our people in a well-grounded peace.

" Another part of this oversight is, in reproving and admonishing those that live offensively or impenitently, and receiving the information of those that have admonished them more privately in vain. Before we bring such matters to the congregation, or a representative church, it is ordinarily most fit for the minister to try himself what he can do more privately to bow the sinner to repentance, especially if it be not a public

crime. A great deal of skill is here required, and difference must be made according to the various tempers of the offenders; but with the most it will be necessary to fall on with the greatest plainness and power, to shake their careless hearts, and make them see what it is to dally with sin; to let them know the evil of it and its sad effects, and the unkindness, unreasonableness, unprofitableness, and other aggravations; and what it is that they do against God and themselves."

The next observations refer to

THE MANNER AND SPIRIT IN WHICH THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY OUGHT TO BE CONDUCTED.

"The ministerial work must be managed purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. A wrong end makes all the work bad, as from us, how good soever in itself. It is not a serving God but for ourselves, if we do it not for God but for ourselves. They that set upon this as a common work, to make a trade of it for their worldly livelihood, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though a good employment. SELF-DENIAL is of absolute necessity in every Christian, but of a double necessity in a minister, as he hath a double sanctification or dedication to God: and without self-denial he

cannot do God an hour's faithful service. Hard studies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, is but a more glorious hypocritical sinning, if the ends be not right.

"This work must be managed laboriously and diligently; as being of such unspeakable consequence to others and ourselves. We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's redemption, to save ourselves and others from damnation, to overcome the devil and demolish his kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ, and attain and help others to the kingdom of glory. And are these works to be done with a careless mind, or a lazy hand? O see then that this work be done with all your might! Study hard, for the well is deep, and our brains are shallow.

"But, especially, be laborious in practice and exercise of your knowledge. Let Paul's words ring in your ears continually. Necessity is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel. Still think with yourselves what lieth upon your hands. If I do not bestir me, Satan may prevail, and the people everlastingly perish, and their blood be required at my hand. By avoiding labour and suffering, I shall draw on me a thousand times more than I avoid; whereas, by present diligence, you prepare for future blessedness. No one was ever a loser by God.

"This work must be carried on prudently, orderly, and by degrees; milk must go before strong meat: the foundation must be first laid before we build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. Men must be brought into a state of grace, before we can expect from them the works of grace. The work of conversion, and repentance from dead works, and faith in Christ, must be first, and frequently, and thoroughly taught. The stewards of God's household must give to each their portion in due season. We must not go beyond the capacities of our people ordinarily, nor teach them the perfection that have not learned the principles.

"Through the whole course of our ministry we must insist most upon the greatest, most certain, and necessary things, and be more seldom and sparing upon the rest. If we can but teach Christ to our people we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The great and commonly acknowledged truths are they that men must live upon, and which are the great instruments of raising the heart to God, and destroying men's sins. And, therefore, we must still have our people's *necessities* in our eye. It will take us off gawdy and needless ornaments, and unprofitable controversies, to remember that one thing is needful. Other things are desirable to be known, but these *must* be known, or else our people are

undone for ever. I confess I think necessity should be a great disposer of a minister's course of study and labours. If we are sufficient for every thing, we might fall upon every thing, and take in order the whole Encyclopædia. But life is short; and we are dull; and eternal things are necessary; and the souls that depend on our teaching are precious. I confess necessity has been the conductor of my studies and life. It chooseth what book I shall read, and tells when and how long. It chooseth my text, and makes my sermon for matter and manner so far as I can keep out my own corruption. Though I know the constant expectation of death has been a great cause of this, yet I know no reason why the most healthful man should not make sure of the *necessaries* first, considering the uncertainty and shortness of all men's lives.

"Hence it is that a preacher must be oft upon the same things, because the matters of necessity are few; we must not either feign necessaries, or fall much upon unnecessaries, to satisfy them that look after novelties: though we must clothe the same necessaries with a grateful variety in the manner of our delivery. The great volumes and tedious controversies that so much trouble us and waste our time, are usually made up more of opinion than necessary verities.

"All our teaching must be as plain and evident as we can make it. For this doth most suit to a

teacher's ends. He that would be understood must speak to the capacity of his hearers, and make it his business to make himself understood. Truth loves the light, and is most beautiful when most naked. It is a sign of an envious enemy to hide the truth; and the sign of an hypocrite to do this under pretence of revealing it: and, therefore, painted obscure sermons (like the painted glass in the windows that keeps out the light) are too often the marks of painted hypocrites. If you would not teach men, what do you in the pulpit? If you would, why do you not speak so as to be understood? I know the height of the matter may make a man not understood when he hath studied to make it as plain as he can; but that a man should purposely cloud the matter in strange words, and hide his mind from the people whom he pretended to instruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound learning, and wise men his folly, pride, and hypocrisy.

"Our whole work must be carried on in a sense of our own insufficiency, and a pious believing dependance upon Christ. We must go to him for light, and life, and strength, who sends us on the work; and when we feel our own faith weak, and our hearts growing dull and unsuitable to so great a work as we have to do, we must have recourse to the Lord that sendeth us, and say, "Lord, wilt thou send me with such an unbelieving heart to persuade others to believe?

Must I daily and earnestly plead with sinners about everlasting life and death, and have no more belief and feeling of these weighty things myself? O send me not naked and unprovided to the work; but as thou commandest me to do it, furnish me with a spirit suitable thereto.' Prayer must carry on our work as well as preaching; he preacheth not heartily to his people that will not pray for them; if we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we are unlike to prevail with them to believe and repent. Paul gives us frequently his example of praying night and day for his hearers: when our own hearts are so far out of order, and theirs so far out of order, if we prevail not with God to mend and help them, we are like to make but unsuccessful work.

" Our work must be managed with great humility; we must carry ourselves meekly and condescendingly to all; and so teach others, as to be as ready to learn of any that can teach us, and so both teach and learn at once.

" There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness both in our preaching and discipline; each must be predominant according to the quality of the person or matter that we have in hand.

" We must be sincerely affectionate, serious, and zealous in all our public and private exhortations. The weight of our matter condemneth coldness and sleepy dulness. We should see that we be well awakened ourselves, and our

spirits in such a plight as may make us fit to awaken others.

" If our words be not sharpened, and pierce not as nails, they will hardly be felt by stony hearts. To speak coldly and slightly of heavenly things, is nearly as bad as to say nothing of them. All our work must be managed reverently as beseemeth them that believe the presence of God, and use not holy things as if they were common. The more of God appeareth in our duties, the more authority will they have with men: and reverence is that affection of the soul, which proceedeth from deep apprehensions of God, and signifieth a mind that is much conversant with him.

" I know not what it doth by others, but the most reverent preacher, that speaks as if he saw the face of God, doth more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the most exquisite preparations. Yea, if he bawl it out with never so much seeming earnestness, if reverence be not answerable to fervency, it worketh but little. Of all preaching in the world, (that speaks not stark lies,) I hate that preaching that tendeth to make the hearers laugh, or to move their minds with tickling levity, and affect them as stage-plays used to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the name of God.

" We should, as it were, suppose we saw the

throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we might be awed with his majesty, when we draw near him in his holy things, lest we profane them, and take his name in vain.

" To this I add, that all our work must be done spiritually, as by men possessed by the Holy Ghost, and acted by him, and men that savour the things of the Spirit. There is in some men's preaching a spiritual strain which spiritual hearers can discern and relish. And in some men's this sacred tincture is so wanting, that even when we speak of spiritual things, the manner is such as if they were common matters.

" The whole course of our ministry must be carried on in a tender love to our people; we must let them see that nothing pleaseth us but what profiteth them; and that which doth them good, doth us good; and nothing troubleth us more than their hurt. We must remember as Hierome saith, ad Nepotian. ' that bishops are not gods, but fathers;' and therefore must be affected to their people as their children: yea, the tenderest love of a mother should not surpass theirs. We must even ' travel in birth for them till Christ be formed in them.' They should see that we care for no outward thing, not money, not liberty, not credit, not life, in comparison with their salvation. Thus should we, as John saith, be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren,

and with Paul, not to count our lives dear to ourselves, so we may finish our course with joy, in doing the work of God for their salvation. When the people see that you unfeignedly love them, they will hear any thing and bear any thing, and follow you the more easily. O, therefore, see that you feel a tender love to your people in your breasts, and then let them feel it in your speeches, and see it in your dealings. Let them see that you spend and are spent for their sakes; and that all you do is for them, and not for any ends of your own.

"Another necessary concomitant of our work is patience. We must bear with many abuses and injuries from those we are doing good for. When we have studied for them, and prayed for them, and beseeched and exhorted them with all condescension, and spent ourselves for them, and given them what we are able, and tended them as if they had been our children, we must look that many would requite us with scorn, and hatred, and contempt, and cast our kindness in our faces with disdain, and take us for their enemies, because we tell them the truth; and that the more we love, the less we shall be beloved. And all this must be patiently undergone, and still we must unweariedly hold on doing good, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance. If they unthankfully scorn and reject our teaching, and bid us look to ourselves, and

care not for them, yet we must hold on. We have to deal with distracted men, that will fly in the face of their physician, but we must not therefore forsake the case. He is unworthy to be a physician, that will be driven away from a phrenitic patient by foul words.

"If we tell them that natural men favour not the things of the Spirit, and are beside themselves in matters of salvation, we must measure our expectations accordingly, and not look that fools should make us as grateful a return as the wise. These are things that all of us can say, but when we come to the practice with sinners that reproach and slander us for our Lord, and are readier to spit in our faces than to give us thanks for our advice, what heart-risings will there be, and how will the remnants of old Adam (pride and passion) struggle against the meekness and patience of the new man! And how sadly do ministers come off in this part of their trial!

"We must be very studious of union and communion among ourselves, and of the unity and peace of the churches that we oversee. We must be sensible how needful that is to the prosperity of the whole, the strengthening of our common cause, the good of the particular members of our flocks, and the farther enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. Instead of quarrelling with our brethren, we must combine against the common adversaries. And ministers must asso-

ciate, and hold communion and correspondency, and constant meetings, to those ends; and smaller differences of judgment are not to interrupt them. They must do as much of the work of God in unity and concord as they can. Had the ministers of the gospel been men of peace, and of Catholic rather than factious spirits, the church of Christ had not been in the case as now it is."

The following extracts contain a warning against

SOME OF THOSE SINS INTO WHICH MINISTERS ARE APT TO FALL.

"One of our most heinous and palpable sins is pride; a sin that hath too much interest in the best; but it is more hateful and inexcusable in us than in any man. Yet it is so prevalent in some of us, that it inditeth our discourses for us, it chooseth us our company, it formeth our countenances, it putteth the accents and emphasis upon our words; when we reason, it is the determiner and exciter of our cogitations. It fills some men's minds with aspiring desires and designs. It possesseth them with envious and bitter thoughts against those that stand in their light, or by any means eclipse their glory, or hinder the progress of their idolized reputation. O, what

a constant companion, what a tyrannical commander, what a sly and insinuating enemy, is this sin of pride! It goes with men to the draper, the mercer, the tailor; it chooseth them their cloth, their trimming, and their fashion. It dresseth them in the morning, at least the outside. And I would that were all, or the worst; but, alas! how frequently doth it go with us to our studies, and there sit with us, and do our work? How often doth it choose our subject; and more often choose our words and ornaments? God biddeth us be as plain as we can, for the informing of the ignorant; and as convincing and serious as we are able, for the melting and changing of unchanged hearts; and pride stands by and contradicteth all; and sometimes it puts in toys and trifles, and polluteth rather than polisheth, and under pretence of laudable ornaments, it dishonoureth our sermons with childish gaudes. It persuadeth us to paint the window that it may dim the light; and to speak to our people that which they cannot understand, to acquaint them that we are able to speak unprofitably. It taketh off the edge, and dulls the life of all our teaching, under pretence of filing off the roughness, unevenness, and superfluity. If we have a plain and cutting passage, it throws it away as too rustic or ungraceful. When God chargeth us to deal with men as for their lives, and beseech them with all the earnestness that we are able,

this cursed sin controlleth all, and condemneth the most holy commands of God, and calleth our most necessary duty a madness; and saith to us, What, will you make people think you are mad? Will you make them say you rage or rave? cannot you speak soberly and moderately? And thus doth pride make many a man's sermons, and what pride makes the devil makes; and what sermons the devil will make, and to what end, we may easily conjecture. Though the matter be of God, yet if the dress and manner be from Satan, we have no great reason to expect success.

"And when pride has made the sermon, it goes with them into the pulpit, it formeth their tone, it animateth them in the delivery, it takes them off from that which may be displeasing, how necessary soever, and putteth them in pursuit of vain applause. And the sum of all this is, that it maketh men, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves and deny God, when they should seek God's glory and deny themselves. When they should ask, What should I say, and how should I say it, to please God best, and do most good? it makes them ask, What shall I say, and how shall I deliver it, to be thought a learned, able preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me? When the sermon is done, pride goeth home with them, and maketh them more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did prevail for the saving change of

souls. They could find in their hearts, but for shame, to ask folks how they liked them, and to draw out their commendation. If they do perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice as having attained their end; but if they perceive that they are esteemed but weak or common men, they are displeased, as having missed the prize of the day.

" But yet this is not all, nor the worst. O that ever it should be spoken of godly ministers, that they are so set upon popular air and of sitting highest in men's estimation, that they envy the parts and names of their brethren that are preferred before them, as if all were taken from their praises that is given to another's, and as if God had given them his gifts to be the mere ornaments and trappings of their persons, that they may walk as men of reputation in the world, and all his gifts in others were to be trodden down and vilified, if they seem to stand in the way of their honour. What! a saint, a preacher for Christ, and yet envy that which hath the image of Christ, and malign his gifts for which he should have the glory, and all because they seem to hinder our glory ! Is not every true Christian a member of the body, and, therefore, partaketh of the blessings of the whole, and of each particular member thereof? and doth not every man owe thanks to God for his brethren's gifts, not only as having himself a part in them, as the foot hath the be-

nefit of the guidance of the eye, but also because his own ends may be attained by his brethren's gifts as well as by his own? And some go so far, that they are unwilling that any one that is abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves: a fearful thing, that any man should so envy at God's gifts, and had rather that his carnal hearers were unconverted, and the drowsy not awakened, than that it should be done by another who may be preferred before them. Yea, so far doth this cursed vice prevail, that in great congregations that have need of the help of many teachers, we can scarce, in many places, get two in equality to live together in love and quietness, and unanimously to carry on the work of God. But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless one be a curate to the other, or ruled by him, they are contending for precedency, and envying each other's interest, and walking with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of their profession, and the great wrong of the congregation.

"And so high are our spirits when it becomes a duty to any man to reprove or contradict us, we are commonly impatient both of the matter and the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and be of our opinion, and promote our reputation, though he be less worthy of our love in

other respects. But he is ungrateful to us that contradicteth us, and differeth from us, and that dealeth plainly with us in our miscarriages, and telleth us of our faults; especially in the management of our public arguings, where the eye of the world is upon us, we can scarce endure any contradiction or plain dealing. I confess I have often wondered at it, that this most heinous sin of pride should be made too light of, and thought consistent with a holy frame of heart and life, when far lesser sins are by ourselves proclaimed to be so damnable in our people.*

* I am happy to introduce here one of the finest examples of genuine Christian humility which is perhaps any where to be found, and when it is recollected that it is an extract from the diary of the late Mr. Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians in North America, no one who is acquainted with his character will entertain a doubt of its being a fair transcript of the state of his mind. "God has made me willing to do any thing that I can do consistent with truth for the sake of peace, and that I might not be a stumbling and offence to others. For this reason, I can cheerfully forego and give up, what I verily believe, after the most mature and impartial search, is my right, in some instances. God has given me that disposition, that if this were the case that a man has done me an hundred injuries, and I (though ever so much provoked to it) have done him one, I feel disposed, and heartily willing, humbly to confess my fault to him, and on my knees to ask forgiveness of him; though, at the same time, he should justify himself in all the injuries he has done me, and should only make use of my humble confession to blacken my character the more, and represent me as the only person guilty; yea, though he should, as it were, insult me, and say, he knew all this before, and that I was making work for repentance."

EDIT.

O that the Lord would lay us at his feet, in the tears of unfeigned sorrow for this sin. Brethren, may I take leave a little to expostulate this case with my own heart and you, that we may see the shame of our sin, and be reformed. Is not pride the sin of devils? The first born of hell? Is it not that wherein Satan's image doth much consist? And is it a tolerable evil in a man that is so engaged against him and his kingdom as we are? The very design of the gospel doth tend to self-abasing; and the work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. Humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature. It is a contradiction to be a sanctified man, or a true Christian, and not humble. All that will be Christians must be Christ's disciples, and come to him to learn; and their lesson is to be meek and lowly, Matt. xi. 28. O how many precepts and admirable examples hath our Lord and Master given us to this end! Can we once conceive of him as purposely washing and wiping his servants' feet, and yet be stout and lordly still? Shall he converse with the meanest, and we avoid them as contemptible people, and think none but persons of riches and honour to be fit for our society? How many of us are oftener found in the houses of gentlemen, than in the poor cottages of those that have need of our help?

" Our very business is to teach the great lesson of self-denial and humility to our people; and how unfit is it then that we should be proud ourselves? We must study humility, and preach humility; and must we not possess and practise it? A proud preacher of humility is, at least, a self-condemning man. The work we do may be God's, and yet we may do it not for God, but for ourselves. I confess I feel such continual danger in this point, that if I do not watch against it, lest I should study for myself, and preach for myself, and write for myself, rather than for Christ, I should soon miscarry; and, after all, I justify not myself when I must condemn the sin. Consider, I beseech you, brethren, what baits there are in the work of the ministry, to entice a man to be selfish; that is, to be carnal and impious, even in the highest works of piety. The fame of a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of a learned man; and woe to him that takes up with the fame of godliness. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. When the times were all for learning and empty formalities, then the temptation of the proud did lie that way; but, now through the unspeakable mercy of God, the most lively preaching is in credit, and godliness itself is in credit: and even the temptation to proud men is here, even to pretend to be zealous preachers and godly men. O what a fine thing doth it seem to have the people crowd to hear us,

and to be affected with what we say, and then we can command their judgments and affections! What a taking thing to be cried up as the ablest and godliest man in the country; and to be famed through the land for the highest spiritual excellencies. To have the people plead for you as their felicity, and call you the pillars of the church of God, and their fathers the chariots and horsemen of Israel, and no lower language than excellent men, and able divines, and have them depend upon you and be ruled by you; though this may be no more than their duty, yet I must again tell you, that a little grace may serve to make you seem zealous men for this. Nay, pride may do it, without any special grace at all. O, therefore, be jealous of yourselves, and in all your studies be sure to study humility. He that exalteth himself shall be brought low, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

"Another sin is not studying unity among Christians as far as it is practicable. It is a great and common sin through the Christian world to take up religion in a way of faction; and, instead of love and tender care of the universal church, to confine that love and respect to a party. Not but that we must prefer in our estimation and communion the purer parts before the impure, and refuse to participate with any in their sins: but the most infirm and diseased part should be compassionated and assisted to our utmost power;

and communion must be held as far as it is lawful, and nowhere avoided but upon the urgency of necessity.

"We have as sad divisions in England, considering the piety of the persons, and the smallness of the matter of our discord, as most nations under heaven have known. The most that keeps us at odds is but about the right form and order of church government. Is the distance so great that Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Independent might not be well agreed? Were they but heartily willing and forward for peace, they might. I know they might. I have spoken with some moderate men of all the parties, and I perceive by their concessions it were an easy work. Were men's hearts but sensible of the church's case, and unfeignedly touched with love to one another, and did they but heartily set themselves to seek it, the settling of a safe and happy peace were an easy work. If we could not in every point agree, we might easily find out, and narrow our differences, and hold communion upon our agreement in the main; determining of the safest way for the managing of our few and small disagreements, without the danger or trouble of the church. But is this much done? It is not done. To the shame of all our faces be it spoken, it is not done. Let each party flatter themselves now as they please, it will be recorded to the shame of the ministry of England while the gospel shall

abide in the Christian world. They all confess the worth of peace, and most of them will preach for it, and talk of it, while they sit still and neglect it, as if it were not worth the looking after. They will read and preach on those texts that command men to follow peace with all men, and as much as in us lieth, if it be possible, to live peaceably with them: and yet we are so far from following it, and doing all that possibly we can for it, that too many will snarl at it, and malign and censure any that endeavour it, as if all zeal for peace did proceed from an abatement from our zeal for holiness; and as if holiness and peace were so fallen out that there were no reconciling them; when yet they have found by long experience, that concord is a sure friend to piety, and piety always moves to concord. We have seen how errors and heresies breed by discord, and discord is bred and fed by them. We have seen, to our sorrow, that where the servants of God should live together as one, of one heart, and one soul, and one life, and should promote each other's faith and holiness, and admonish and assist each other against sin, and rejoice together in the hope of their future glory; we have contrarily lived in mutual jealousies, and drowned holy love in bitter contendings, and have studied to disgrace and undermine one another, and to increase our own parties by right or wrong. O what a nation might England have been ere now, if it had not

been for the proud and obstinate contentions of godly ministers! What abundance of good might we have done! Nay, what might we not have done, if our perverseness had not marred our work! Again, though we were not at all of a mind in some smaller matters, yet if we did but hold communion and correspondency, and join together in the main, and do as much of God's work as we can in concurrent unanimity, the people would far more regard us, and we might be in a greater capacity to do them good. If I durst, in conscience, I would have silenced all this, for fear of giving offence to those whom I much honour. But what am I but a servant of Christ? and what is my life worth but to do him service? and whose favour can recompense for the ruins of the church? and who can be silent while souls are undone? Not I, for my part, while God is my Master, and his word my rule; his work my business, and the success of it for the saving of men my end. Who can be reconciled to that which so lamentably crosseth his Master's interest and his main end?

"The next sin which I shall mention, that we are lamentably guilty of, is this: We do not so seriously, unreservedly, and industriously lay out ourselves in the work of the Lord, as beseemeth men of our profession and engagements. I bless the Lord that there are so many that do his work with all their might; but alas! for the most part,

even of those that we take for godly ministers, how reservedly and how negligently do we go through our work. How few of us do so behave ourselves, in our office, as men that are wholly devoted thereto, and have devoted all that they have to the same ends. And because you shall see my grounds for this confession, I shall mention to you some of the sinful discoveries of it which do too much abound.

"It is too common with us to be negligent in our studies, and few men will be at that pains which is necessary for the right informing of their understandings, and fitting them for their farther work. Some men have no delight in their studies, but take only now and then an hour, as an unwelcome task which they are forced to undergo, and are glad when they are from under the yoke. Will neither the natural desire of knowing, nor the spiritual desire of knowing God and things divine, nor the consciousness of our great ignorance and weakness, nor the sense of the weight of our ministerial work, will none of all these keep us closer to our studies, and make us more painful in seeking after the truth? O what abundance of things are there that a minister should understand, and what a great defect is it to be ignorant of them; and how much shall we miss such knowledge in our work! Many ministers study only to compose their sermons, and very little more, when there are so

many books to be read, and so many matters that we should not be unacquainted with. Nay, in the study of our sermons we are too negligent, gathering only a few naked heads, and not considering of the most forcible expressions by which we should set them home to men's hearts. We must study how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick, and not leave all this to our extemporary promptitude, unless it be in the cases of necessity. Certainly, brethren, experience will teach you that men are not made learned or wise without hard study, and unwearied labours, and experience.

"If ministers were set upon the work of the Lord, it would be done more vigorously than by the most of us it is. How few ministers do preach with all their might; or speak about everlasting joy or torment in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in good earnest. It would make a man's heart ache to see a company of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a minister, and not have a word that is like to quicken or awaken them: To think with ourselves, O if these sinners were but convinced and awakened, they might yet be converted and live. And, alas! we speak so drowsily or gently, that sleepy sinners cannot hear. The blow falls so light that hard hearted persons cannot feel it. Most ministers will not so much as put out their voice, and stir up themselves to an earnest utterance: but if

they do speak loudly and earnestly, how few do answer it with earnestness of matter; and the voice doth little good, the people will take it but as mere bawling when the matter doth not correspond. It would grieve one to hear what excellent doctrines some ministers have in hand, and let them die in their hands for want of close and lively application. What fit matter they have for convincing sinners: and how little they make of it; and what a deal of good it might do if it were set home; and yet they cannot nor will not do it. O! Sirs, how plain, how close, and earnestly should we deliver a message of such a nature as ours is; when the everlasting life or death of men is concerned in it. Methinks we are no where so wanting as in this seriousness. There is nothing more unsuitable to such a business than to be slight and dull. What! speak coldly for God, and for men's salvation; can we believe that our people must be converted or condemned, and yet can we speak in a drowsy tone? In the name of God, brethren, labour to awaken your hearts before you come, and when you are in the work, that you may be fit to awaken the hearts of sinners. Remember that they must be awakened or damned; and a sleepy preacher will hardly awake them. If you give the holy things of God the highest praises in words, and yet do it coldly, you will seem in the manner to unsay what you said in the matter. It is a kind of

contempt of great things, especially so great, to speak of them without great affection and fervency. The manner, as well as the words, must set them forth, if we are commanded whatever our hand findeth to do, to do it with all our might. But alas! how few, how thin sown are such men; here one and there one, even among good ministers that have an earnest persuading working way, or that the people can feel him preach when they hear him.

"Another sad evil is the prevalence of worldly fleshly interests too much against the interest of Christ. This appears, 1. From our temporizing spirit; 2. From our too much minding worldly things, and shrinking from duties that will hinder our convenience; 3. From our barrenness in works of charity, and in improving all that we have for our Master's use. See then whether this be not the great and lamentable sin of the ministers of the gospel, that they be not fully devoted to God, and give not up themselves and all they have to the carrying on of the blessed work which they have undertaken: and whether flesh-pleasing and self-seeking, and an interest distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty, and walk too unfaithfully in so great a trust, and reservedly serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of his work, and withdraw from that which would put us upon cost and sufferings. And whether this do not shew

that too many are earthly that seem to be heavenly, and mind the things below while they preach for the things above, and idolize the world while they call men to contemn it."

MOTIVES TO ACTIVITY IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

"The first quickening consideration which the text here affordeth us, is taken from our relation to all the flock. We are overseers of it. Do men know and consider what they have undertaken that live at ease and pleasure, and have time to take their superfluous recreations, and to spend an hour and more at once in loitering and vain discourses, when so much work doth lie upon their hands? Why, brethren, do you consider where you stand, and what you have taken upon you? Why, you have undertaken the conduct under Christ of a band of his soldiers against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. You must lead them on to the sharpest conflicts. You must acquaint them with the enemy's stratagems and assaults. You must watch yourselves, and keep them watching. If you miscarry, they and you may perish. You have a subtile enemy, and therefore must be wise; you have a vigilant enemy, and therefore you must be vigilant; a malicious, and violent, and unwearied enemy, and therefore you must be re-

solute, courageous, and unwearied; you are in a crowd of enemies, compassed with them on every side, and if you only heed one and not all, you will quickly fall. And O, what a world of work have you to do! Had you but one ignorant old man or woman to teach, though willing to learn, what a tedious task is it; but if they be as unwilling as ignorant, how much more difficult is it. But to have such a multitude of these, as most of us have, what work will it find us. Who hath ever tried it that knoweth it not by experience? What a pitiful life is it to reason with men that have almost lost the use of reason, and to talk with obstinate wilful people.

"Again, what an excellent life is it to live in the habitual study of the scriptures and preaching of Christ; to be still searching into his mysteries, or feeding on them, to be daily in the consideration of the blessed nature, or works, or ways of God. Others are glad of the leisure of the Lord's day, and now and then an hour besides when they can lay hold of it: but we may keep a continual Sabbath; we may do nothing else almost but study and talk of God and glory, and call upon him, and drink in his sacred saving truths. Our employment is all high and spiritual; whether we be alone or with others, our business is for another world. O were but our hearts more suitable to this work, what a blessed joyful life should we live. How sweet should our study be to us.

How pleasant would the pulpit be; and what a delight would our conference of these things afford us. To live among such excellent helps as our libraries afford, and have so many silent wise companions whenever we please, and of such variety: all these, and more such privileges of the ministry, bespeak our unwearied diligence in the work.

"The next motive in the text, is from the dignity of the object. It is the church of God which we must foresee and feed. It is that church which the world is much upheld for; which is sanctified by the Holy Ghost; which is united to Christ, and is his mystical body: that church which angels are present with, and attend upon as ministering spirits; whose very little ones have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven. O what a charge is it that we have undertaken. And shall we be unfaithful to such a charge? Have we the stewardship of God's own family, and shall we neglect it? Have we the conduct of those saints that must live for ever with God in glory, and shall we neglect them? God forbid. I beseech you, brethren, let this thought awaken the negligent. You that draw back from painful, displeasing, suffering duties, and will put off men's souls with ineffectual formalities; do you think this an honourable usage of Christ's spouse? Are the souls of men thought meet by God to see his face, and live for ever in his glory, and are they

not worthy of your utmost cost and labour? Do you think so basely of the church of God, as if it deserved not the best of your care and help?

"The last motive that is mentioned in my text, is, from the price that was paid for the church which we oversee. God, the Son, did purchase it with his own blood. O what an argument is here to quicken the negligent; and what an argument to condemn those that will not be quickened up to their duty by it.

"O then let us hear those arguments of Christ, whenever we feel ourselves grow dull and careless. Did I die for them, and wilt not thou look after them? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth thy labour? Did I come down from heaven to earth, to seek and to save that which was lost; and wilt not thou go to the next door, or street, or village, to seek them? How small is thy labour or condescension to mine. I debased myself to this, but it is thy honour to be so employed. Have I done and suffered so much for their salvation, and was I willing to make thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuse that little that lieth upon thy hands? Every time we look upon our congregations, let us believingly remember that they are the purchase of Christ's blood; and, therefore, should be regarded accordingly by us. And think what a confusion it will be at the last day to a negligent minister, to have this blood of the Son of God to be pleaded against him."

SOME EXHORTATIONS TO FIDELITY IN THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL, WITH THE BENEFITS THAT WILL FLOW FROM IT.

" First then, and above all, see that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own souls. It is a fearful case to be an unsanctified professor; but much more to be an unsanctified preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up indictments against your own souls. Remember when you are arguing against sin you are aggravating your own; when you proclaim to your hearers the riches of Christ and grace, you publish your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your unhappiness in being without them. What can you do in persuading men to Christ, in drawing them from the world, in urging them to a life of faith and holiness, but conscience, if it were awake, might tell you that you speak all this to your own confusion? If you mention hell, you mention your own inheritance. If you describe the joys of heaven, you describe your misery that have no right to it. What can you devise to say, for the most part, but it will be against your own souls? O miserable life! that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend all his days in a course of self-condemning!

A graceless unexperienced preacher is one of the most unhappy creatures upon earth; and yet he is ordinarily most insensible of his unhappiness. For he hath so many counters that seem like the gold of saving grace, and so many splendid stones that seem like Christian jewels, that he is seldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty; but thinks he is rich, and wanteth nothing, when he is poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. He is acquainted with the holy scriptures, he is exercised in holy duties, he liveth not in open disgraceful sin, he serveth at God's altar, he reproveth other men's faults, and preacheth up holiness both of heart and life; and how can this man but be holy? O what an aggravated misery is this, to perish in the midst of plenty! and to famish with the bread of life in our hands, while we offer it to others, and urge it on them! That those ordinances of God should be the occasions of our delusion, which are instituted to be the means of our conviction and salvation! and that while we hold the looking glass of the gospel to others, to shew them the true face of the state of their souls, we should either look on the backside of it ourselves, where we can see nothing, or turn it aside, that it may mis-represent us to ourselves. If such a wretched man would take my counsel, he should make a stand, and call his heart and life to an account, and fall a preaching awhile to himself before he preach any more to others.

"My second particular exhortation is this: Content not yourselves to have the main work of grace, but be also very careful that your graces be kept in life and action; and that you preach, to yourselves, the sermons that you study, before you preach them to others. If you did this for your own sakes, it would be no lost labour; but I am speaking to you on the public account, and that you would do it for the sake of the church. When your minds are in a heavenly holy frame, your people are like to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers, and praises, and doctrine, will be heavenly and sweet to them. They will likely feel when you have been much with God: that which is on your hearts most, is like to be most in their ears. I confess, I must speak it by lamentable experience, that I speak to my flock the distempers of my soul, when I let my heart grow cold; and when it is confused, my preaching will be so; and so I can observe too oft in the best of my hearers, that when I have a while grown cold in preaching, they have cooled accordingly; and the next prayers that I have heard from them have been too like my preaching. We are the nurses of Christ's little ones. If we forbear our food, we shall famish them; they will quickly find it in the want of milk; and we may quickly see it again on them, in the lean and dull discharge of their several duties. If we let our love go down, we are not so like to raise up

theirs. If we abate our holy care and fear, it will appear in our doctrine. If the matter shew it not, the manner will. If we feed on unwholesome food, either errors, or fruitless controversies, our hearers are like to fare the worse for it. Whereas, if we could abound in faith, and love, and zeal, how would it overflow to the refreshing of our congregations, and how would it appear in the increase of the same graces in others. O brethren! watch therefore over your own hearts; keep out lusts, and passions, and worldly inclinations. Keep up the life of faith and love. Be much at home; and be much with God. If it be not your daily serious business to study your own hearts, and subdue corruptions, and live as upon God, if you make it not your very work which you constantly attend, all will go amiss, and you will starve your auditors; or if you have but an affected fervency, you cannot expect such a blessing to attend it. Be much, above all, in secret prayer and meditation. There you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices. Remember you cannot decline and neglect your duty to your own hurt alone; but many will be losers by it, as well as you. For your people's sake, therefore, look to your hearts.

"And more particularly, methinks a minister should take some special pains with his heart before he is to go to the congregation. If it be then cold, how is he like to warm the hearts of his

hearers? Go, therefore, then specially to God for life; and read some rousing awakening book, or meditate on the weight of the subject that you are to speak of, and on the great necessity of your people's souls, that you may go in the zeal of the Lord into his house.

"My next particular exhortation is this: Stir up yourselves to the great work of God, when you are upon it, and see that you do it with all your might. Though I move you not to a constant loudness, (for that will make your fervency contemptible,) yet see that you have a constant seriousness, and when the matter requireth it, (as it should do it, the application at least of every doctrine,) then lift up your voice, and spare not your spirits, and speak to them as to men that must be awakened either here or in hell. Look upon your congregations believingly, and with compassion, and think in what a state of joy or torment they must all be for ever; and then methinks it should make you earnest, and melt your heart in the sense of their condition. O speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell! Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest. Truly, brethren, they are great works that are to be done, and you must not think that trifling will dispatch them. You cannot break men's hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gaudy oration. Men will

not cast away their dearest pleasures upon a drowsy request of one that seemeth not to mean as he speaks, or to care much whether his request be granted. If you say that the work is God's, and he may do it by the weakest means; I answer, it is true, he may do so; but yet his ordinary way is to work by means; and to make not only the matter that is preached, but also the manner of preaching, to be instrumental to the work; or else it were a small matter whom he should employ, if a man would but speak the truth. If grace made as little use of the ministerial persuasion as some conceive, we need not so much mind a reformation, nor cast out the insufficient.

" A great matter also with the most of our hearers, doth lie in the very pronunciation and tone of speech. The best matter will scarce move them, if it be not movingly delivered. Especially see that there be no affectation, but that we speak as familiarly to our people as we would do if we were talking to any of them personally. The want of a familiar tone and expression is as great a defect in most of our deliveries as any thing whatsoever, and that which we should be very careful to amend. When a man hath a reading or declaiming tone, like a school boy saying his lesson, or an oration, few are moved with any thing that he saith. Let us, therefore, rouse up ourselves to the work of the Lord, and speak to our people as for their lives, and save them as by

violence, pulling them out of the fire. Satan will not be charmed out of his possession; we must lay siege to the souls of sinners, which are his garrisons, and find out where his chief strength lieth, and lay the battery of God's ordnance against it, and ply it close till a breach be made; and then suffer them not by their shifts to make it up again; but find out their common objections, and give them a full and satisfactory answer. We have reasonable creatures to deal with, and as they abuse their reason against the truth, so they will expect better reason for it before they will obey. We must, therefore, see that our sermons be all convincing; that we make the light of scripture and reason shine so bright in the faces of the ungodly, that it may even force them to see, unless they wilfully shut their eyes. A sermon, full of mere words, how neatly soever it be composed, while there is wanting the light of evidence, and the life of zeal, is but an image, or a well-dressed carcase. In preaching, there is intended a communion of souls, and a communication of somewhat from ours to theirs. As we and they have understandings, and wills, and affections, so must the bent of our endeavours be to communicate the fullest light of evidence from our understandings into theirs, and to warm their hearts by kindling in them holy affections, as by a communication from ours. The great things which we have to commend to our hearers, have

reason enough on their side, and lie plain before them in the word of God; we should, therefore, be so furnished with all store of evidence, as to come with a torrent upon their understandings, and bear down all before us, and with our dilemmas and expostulations to bring them to a nonplus, and pour out shame upon all their vain objections, that they may be forced to yield to the power of truth, and see that it is great, and will prevail.

"Moreover, if you would prosper in your work be sure to keep up earnest desires and expectations of success. If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours, and you long not to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and do not study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much fruit of it. It is an ill sign of a false self-seeking heart, that can be content to be still doing, and see no fruits of their labour; so I have observed that God seldom blesseth any man's work so much as his, whose heart is set upon the success; but let all that preach for Christ and men's salvation, be unsatisfied till they have the thing they preach for. He had never the right end of a preacher that is indifferent whether he is to obtain it, and is not grieved when he misseth it, and is not rejoiced when he can see the desired issue. When a man doth study only what to say, and how with commendation to spend the hour, and looks no more after

it, unless it be to know what people think of his own abilities, and thus holds on from year to year; I must needs think that this man doth preach for himself, and drive on a private trade of his own, and doth not preach for Christ even when he preacheth Christ, how excellently soever he may seem to do it. No wise or charitable physician is content to be still giving physic, and see no amendment among his patients, but have them all to die upon his hands. I know that a faithful minister may have comfort when he wants success; and though Israel be not gathered, our reward is with the Lord, and our acceptance is not according to the fruit, but according to our labour. But then, 1*st*, He that longeth not for the success of his labours, can have none of this comfort, because he is not a faithful labourer. This is only for them that I speak, who are set upon the end, and grieved that they miss it. And 2*d*, This is not the full comfort that we must desire, but only such a part as may quiet us, though we miss the rest.

" Again, Study to *do well*, as well as *say well;* be zealous of good works. Spare not, for any cost, if it may promote your Master's work.

" Maintain your innocency, and walk without offence. Let your lives condemn sin, and persuade men to duty. Would you have your people be more careful of their souls than you will be of yours? If you would have them re-

deem their time, do not you mispend yours. If you would not have them vain in their conference, see that you speak yourselves the things which may edify, and tend to minister grace to your hearers. Order your own families well, if you would have them do so by theirs. Be not proud and lordly, if you would have them to be lowly. There is no virtue wherein your example will do more, at least, to abate men's prejudice, than humility, and meekness, and self-denial. Forgive injuries, and be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; do as our Lord, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. If sinners be stubborn, and stout, and contemptuous, flesh and blood will persuade you to take up their weapons, and to master them by their carnal means; but that is not the way, (farther than necessary self-preservation or public good requireth it,) but overcome with kindness, and patience, and gentleness. The former may shew that you have more worldly power than they, (wherein yet they are ordinarily too hard for the faithful,) but it is the latter only that will tell them that you overtop them in spiritual excellency, and in the true qualifications of a saint. Contend then with charity, and not with violence, and set meekness, and love, and patience, against force. Remember you are obliged to be the servants of all. Condescend to men of low estate; be not strange to the poor ones of your flock. They are apt to

take your strangeness for contempt. Familiarity improved to holy ends, is exceeding necessary, and may do abundance of good. Speak not stoutly or disrespectfully to any one; but be courteous to the meanest, as your equal in Christ. A kind and winning carriage is a cheap way of advantage to do men good.

" O brethren, what a blow may we give to the kingdom of darkness by the faithful and skilful managing of the ministerial work! If then the saving of souls, of your neighbours' souls, of many souls, from everlasting misery, be worth your labour; up and be doing. If the increase of the true church of Christ be desirable, this work is excellent which is so likely to promote it. If you would be the fathers of many that shall be newborn to God, and would see the travail of your souls with comfort, and would be able to say at last, Here am I, and the children that thou hast given me; up then, and ply this blessed work. If it will do you good to see your holy converts among the saints in glory, and praising the Lamb before his throne; if you will be glad to present them blameless and spotless to Christ, be glad then of this singular opportunity that is offered you. If you are ministers of Christ indeed, you will long for the perfecting of his body, and the gathering in of his elect, and your hearts will be set upon it, and you will travail as in birth for them, till Christ be formed in them; and then

you will take such opportunities as your harvest time, and as the sun-shine days in a rainy harvest, in which it is unreasonable and inexcusable to be idle. If you have any spark of Christian compassion in you, it will sure seem worth your utmost labour to save so many souls from death, and to cover so great a multitude of sins. If you are indeed co-workers with Christ, set then to his work, and neglect not the souls for whom he died. O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that now there is an opportunity in your hands to save a soul, and to rejoice the angels of heaven, and to rejoice Christ himself, and that your work is to cast Satan out of a sinner, and to increase the family of God. And what is your own hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing; is not your saved people in the presence of Christ Jesus at his coming? Yea, doubtless, they are your glory and your joy, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

"The second happy benefit of our work, if well managed, will be, The most orderly building up of those that are converted, and the stablishing them in the faith.

"A third benefit that may be expected by the well-managing of this work, is this: It will make our public preaching to be better understood and regarded. When you have acquainted them with the principles, they will the better understand all that you say.

" Again, If you take frequent opportunities of personal conference with your people, it will be no contemptible benefit that, by this course, you will come to be familiar with them; and, by means of these private instructions, you will come to be the better acquainted with each person's spiritual state, and so the better know how to watch over them, and carry yourselves towards them, ever after. We may know the better how to preach to them when we know their temper, and their chief objections, and so what they have most need to hear. We shall the better know wherein to be jealous of them, with a pious jealousy, and what temptations to help them most against. We shall the better know how to lament for them, and to rejoice with them, and to pray for them to God. For as he that will rightly pray for himself, will know his own sores and wants, and the diseases of his own heart; so he that will rightly pray for others, should know theirs as far as he may, and as is meet.

" Another benefit will be this: We shall by this means be the better enabled to help our people against particular temptations, and we shall much better prevent their entertainment of any particular errors or heresies, or their falling into schism, to the hazard of themselves and the church.

" Another and one of the greatest benefits of our work will be this: It will better inform men

of the true nature of the ministerial office, or awaken them to better consideration of it than is now usual. It is now too common for men to think that the work of the ministry is nothing but to preach well, and to baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper, and visit the sick; and by this means the people will submit to no more, and too many ministers are negligently or wilfully such strangers to their own calling, that they will do no more. It hath oft grieved my heart to observe some eminent able preachers, how little they do for the saving of souls, save only in the pulpit; and to how little purpose much of their labour is, by this neglect. They have hundreds of people that they never spoke a word to personally for their salvation, and if we may judge by their practice, they take it not for their duty; and the principal thing that hardeneth men in this oversight is the common neglect of the private part of the work by others. There are so few that do much in it, and the omission is grown so common among pious able men, that they have abated the disgrace of it by their parts, and a man may now be guilty of it, without any common observance or dishonour. Never doth sin so reign in a church or state as when it hath gained reputation, or, at least, is no disgrace to the sinner, nor a matter of any offence to beholders. But I make no doubt, through the mercy of God, but the restored practice of personal oversight will convince many ministers that this is as truly their work as

that which they now do; and may awaken them to see that the ministry is another kind of business than too many excellent preachers do take it to be. Brethren, do but set yourselves closely to this work, and follow on diligently, and though you do it silently, without any words to them that are negligent, I am in hope that most of you here may live to see the day, that the neglect of private personal oversight of all the flock shall be taken for a scandalous and odious omission, and shall be as disgraceful to them that are guilty of it, as preaching but once a-day was heretofore. A schoolmaster must not only read a common lecture, but take a personal account of his scholars, or else he is like to do little good. If physicians should only read a public lecture of physic, their patients would not be much the better for them; nor would a lawyer secure your estate by reading a lecture of law. The charge of a pastor requireth personal dealing, as well as any of these. Let us shew the world this by our practice, for most men are grown regardless of bare words.

" Another singular benefit which we may hope for from the faithful performance of this work is, that it will help our people better to understand the nature of their duty towards their overseers; and consequently to discharge it better. This were no matter if it were only for our sakes; but their own salvation is very much concerned in it. I am confident, by sad experience, that it is none

of the least impediments to their happiness, and to a true reformation of the church, that the people understand not what the work and power of a minister is, and what their own duty towards them is. They commonly think that a minister hath no more to do with them but to preach to them, and visit them in sickness, and administer sacraments; and that if they hear him, and receive the sacrament from him, they owe no further obedience, nor can he require any more at their hands. Little do they know that the minister is in the church, as the schoolmaster in his school, to teach and take an account of every one in particular, and that all Christians, ordinarily, must be disciples or scholars in some such school."

We have the following observations from our author, when speaking of the importance of

PERSONALLY VISITING THE PEOPLE, AND ENDEAVOURING TO SECURE AN INTEREST IN THEIR AFFECTIONS.

"If ministers were content to purchase an interest in their people at the dearest rates to their own flesh, and would condescend to them, and be familiar, and loving, and prudent in their carriage, and abound, according to their ability, in good works, they might do much more with their people than ordinarily they can do. Not that we

should much regard an interest in them for our own sakes, but that we may be more capable of promoting the interest of Christ, and of furthering their own salvation. Were it not for their own sakes, it were no great matter whether they love or hate us. But what commander can do any great service by an army that hate him; and how can we think that they will much regard our counsel, while they abhor or disregard the persons that give it them? Labour, therefore, for some competent interest in your people's estimation and affection, and then you may the better prevail with them.

"And again, I must say that I think it an easier matter by far to compose and preach a good sermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man in private for his instruction in the necessary principles of religion. As much as this work is contemned by some, I doubt not but it will try the parts and spirits of ministers, and shew you the difference between one man and another more fully than pulpit preaching will do."

—Referring to those who either avowedly make their being occupied with other engagements an excuse for omitting to visit their flocks, or secretly allow it to operate as one to their own minds, our author thus writes:—

"For the matter of visitations and civilities, if they be for greater ends or use than our ministerial employments are, you may break a Sabbath

for them, you may forbear preaching for them, and so may forbear this private work. But if it be otherwise, how dare you make them a pretence to neglect so great a duty? Must God wait on your friends? What, if they be lords, or knights, or gentlemen? Must they be served before God? Or is their displeasure or censure a greater hurt to you than God's displeasure? Or dare you think, when God shall question you for your neglects, to put him off with this excuse, 'Lord, I would have spent more of my time in seeking men's salvation, but that such a gentleman, and such a friend, would have taken it ill, if I had not waited on them?' If you yet seek to please man, you are no longer the servants of Christ. He that dares spend his life in flesh-pleasing and man-pleasing, is bolder than I am. And he that dares waste his time in compliments, doth little consider what he hath to do with it. O that I could but improve my time according to my convictions of the necessity of improving it! He that hath looked death in the face as oft as I have done, I will not thank him to value his time. I profess I am astonished at those ministers that have time to spare, that can hunt, or shoot, or bowl, or use the like recreations two or three hours, yea whole days almost together; that sit an hour together in vain discourses, and spend whole days in complimental visitations, and journeys, to such ends. Good Lord! what do these men think on, when

so many souls about them cry for their help, and death gives no respite, and they know not how short a time their people and they may be together; when the smallest parish hath so much work that may employ all their diligence night and day. Brethren, I hope you are content to be plainly dealt with. If you have no sense of the worth of souls, and of the preciousness of that blood that was shed for them, and of the glory they are going to, and of the misery they are in danger of; then are you no Christians, and therefore very unfit to be ministers; and if you have, how can you find time for needless recreations, visitations, or discourses? Dare you, like idle gossips, chat, and trifle away your time when you have such works as these to do, and so many of them? O precious time! how swiftly doth it pass away! how soon will it be gone! What are the forty years of my life that are past? Were every day as long as a month, methinks it were too short for the work of a day. Have we not lost enough already in the days of our vanity? Never do I come to a dying man that is not utterly stupid, but he better sees the worth of time. O then, if they could call time back again, how loud would they call! If they could but buy it, what would they give for it; and yet can we afford to trifle it away, yea, and to allow ourselves in this, and wilfully cast off the greatest works of God? O what a befooling thing is sin, than can thus distract men

that seem so wise! Is it possible that a man of any true compassion and honesty, or any care of his ministerial duty, or any sense of the strictness of his account, should have time to spare for idleness and vanity?

"May a physician, in the plague time, take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death? As his pleasure is not worth men's lives, so neither is yours worth men's souls. Suppose your cities were besieged, and the enemy on one side watching all advantages to surprise it, and on the other seeking to fire it with grenadoes which are cast in continually, I pray you tell me now, if certain men undertake it as their office to watch the ports, and others to quench the fire that shall be kindled in the houses, what time will you allow these men for their recreation or relaxation; when the city is in danger, or the fire will burn and prevail if they intermit their diligence? Or would you excuse one of these men if he came off his work, and said, I am but flesh and blood, I must have some pleasure or relaxation? At the utmost, sure you would allow him none but of necessity.

For as the physician's work is half done when he fully knows the disease, so when you are acquainted well with your people's case, you will know what to preach on; and it will furnish you with matter to talk an hour with an ignorant or

obstinate sinner, as much as an hour's study will do: for you will know what you have need to insist on, and what objections of theirs to repel."

—In speaking of pastoral visitations our author suggests the following hints, as an example of the way in which the subject may be advantageously introduced.—

"Neighbours, it may perhaps seem to some of you as an unusual, so a troublesome business, that I put you upon; but I hope you will not think it needless: for if I had thought so, I should have spared you and myself the labour. But my conscience hath told me,—yea, God hath told me in his word, so roundly what it is to have the charge of men's souls, and how the blood of them that perish in their sins will be required at the hands of a minister that neglecteth them, that I dare not be so guilty of it as I have been. Alas! all our business in this world is to get well to heaven; and God hath appointed us to be guides to his people, to help them safe thither. If this be well done, all is done; and if this be not done, we are for ever undone. The Lord knows how little a while I and you may be together; and, therefore, it concerns us to do what we can for our own and your salvation, before we leave you, or you leave the world. All other business in the world is but toys and dreams in comparison of this. The labours of your calling are but to prop up the cottages of your flesh, while you are

making ready for death and judgment; which, God knows, is near at hand. And I hope you will be glad of help in so needful a work, and not think it much that I put you to this trouble, when the trifles of the world will not be got without greater trouble.—This, some of this, or somewhat to this purpose, may tend to make them more willing to hear you, and receive instruction, or give you an account of their knowledge or practice, which must be the work of the day.

"But I may here add, that I find by experience, people will better take plain close dealing about their sin, and misery, and duty, when you have them alone, than they will before others; and if you have not opportunity to set it home, and deal freely with them, you will frustrate all."

Respecting the example of Paul in the whole address to the elders of Ephesus, as mentioned, Acts xx. 19, our author thus writes:

"O what a lesson is here before us; but how ill is it learned by those that still question whether to attend to it be their duty! I confess, some of these words of Paul have so often been presented before my eyes, and stuck upon my conscience, that I have been much convinced by them both of my duty and neglect. And I think this one speech better deserveth a twelvemonth's study, than most things that young students do lay out their time in. O, brethren, write it on your study doors, or

set it as your copy, in capital letters, still before your eyes. Could we but well learn two or three lines of it, what preachers should we be. 1. For our general business—Serving the Lord with all humility of mind. 2. Our special work—Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock. 3. Our doctrine—Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. The place and manner of teaching—I have taught you publicly, and from house to house. 5. The object and internal manner—I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. This is it that must win souls and preserve them. 6. His innocency and self-denial for the advantage of the gospel—I have coveted no man's silver or gold. 7. His patience—None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear. 8. And among all our motives, these have need to be in capital letters before our eyes. 1. We oversee and feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 2. Grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock, and of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do yourselves and the church more good than twenty years study of those lower things, which, though they get you greater applause in the world, yet, separated from these, will make you but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals."

—The last quotations I introduce from the REFORMED PASTOR, are the following observations on

THE IMPORTANCE OF GREAT FIDELITY IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.—

"Great fidelity in the work of the ministry is absolutely necessary to the welfare of our people. How much it doth conduce to their salvation is manifest. Brethren, can you look believingly on your miserable neighbours, and not perceive them calling for your help? There is not a sinner whose case you should not so far compassionate as to be willing to relieve them at dearer rates than this comes to. Can you see them as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully pass by? Can you hear them cry to you as the man of Macedonia to Paul in his vision, come and help us; and yet will you refuse your help? Are you entrusted with an hospital, where one languisheth in one corner, and another groaneth in another, and crieth out, O help me, pity me, for the Lord's sake; and a third, is raging mad, and would destroy himself and you, and yet will you sit idle, or refuse your help? If it may be said of him that relieveth not men's bodies, how much more of them that relieve not men's souls, that if you see your brother has need, and shut up the bowels of your compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in you? You are not such

monsters, such hard-hearted men, but you will pity a leper, you will pity the naked, imprisoned, or desolate, you will pity him that is tormented with grievous pains or sickness; and will you not pity an ignorant hard-hearted sinner? Will you not pity one that must be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and lie under his remediless wrath, if thorough repentance speedily prevent it not? O what a heart is it that will not pity such a one! What shall I call the heart of such a man; a heart of stone, or a very rock, or adamant, or the heart of a tiger, or rather the heart of an infidel? for sure, if he believed the misery of the impenitent, it is not possible but he should have pity on him. Can you tell men in the pulpit that they shall certainly be damned unless they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have proclaimed such a danger? And if you pity them, will you not do this much for their salvation? What abundance around about you are blindly hastening to perdition, and your voice is appointed to be the means of reclaiming them. The physician hath no excuse who is doubly bound to relieve the sick, when every neighbour is to help them. Brethren, what if you have heard sinners cry after you in the streets,—'O sir, have pity on me, and afford me your advice; I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I am afraid lest I shall be miserable in the

next.'—Could you deny your help to such a sinner? What if they came to your study door, and cried for help, and would not go away till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God: could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why, alas! such persons are less miserable than they that cannot cry for help. It is the hardened sinner, that cares not for your help, that most needeth it; and he that hath not so much life as to feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense left as to pity himself; this is the man that is most to be pitied. Look upon your neighbours round about you, and think what abundance need your help in no less a case than the apparent danger of damnation: and every impenitent person that you see, and know about you, suppose that you hear them thus cry to you for help,—'As ever you pitied poor wretches, pity us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell; if you have the hearts of men, pity us,'—and do that for them that you would do if they followed you with such complaints. O how can you walk, and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, and think how they must lie in perpetual misery, you should break forth into tears, (as the prophet did when he looked upon Hazael,) and then fall on with the most importunate exhortations. When you must

visit them in their sickness, will it not wound your hearts to see them ready to depart into misery, before you have ever dealt seriously with them for their recovery? O then, for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of poor souls, have pity on them, and bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation.

And I must further tell you, that this ministerial fidelity is necessary to your own welfare, as well as to your people's. For this is your work, according to which, among others, you shall be judged. You can no more be saved without *ministerial* diligence and fidelity, than they or you can be saved without *Christian* diligence and fidelity. If you care not for others, at least care for yourselves. O what is it to answer for the neglect of such a charge; and what sins more heinous than the betraying of souls. Doth not that threatening make us tremble;—If thou warn not the wicked, their blood will I require at thy hands.—I am afraid, nay, I am past doubt, that the day is near, when unfaithful ministers will wish that they had never known their charge; but that they had rather been colliers, or tinkers, or sweepers of channels, than pastors of Christ's flock: when, besides all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for. O brethren, our death, as well as our people's, is at hand; and it is as terrible to an unfaithful pastor as to any. When we see that

die we must, and there is no remedy, no wit or learning, no credit or popular applause can put by the stroke, or delay the time; but willing, or unwilling, our souls must be gone, and that into a world that we never saw, where our persons and worldly interests will not be respected. O then, for a clear conscience, that can say, I lived not to myself but to Christ; I spared not my pains, I hid not my talent, I concealed not men's misery, nor the way of their recovery. O sirs, let us therefore take time when we may have it, and work while it is day, for the night cometh when none can work. This is our day too, and by doing good to others we must do good to ourselves. If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a sure and great reward, the harvest is before you; gird up the loins of your minds, and quit yourselves like men; that you may end your days with that confident triumph,—'I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous Judge, shall give me.'—And if you would be blessed with those that die in the Lord, labour now that you may rest from your labours then, and do such works as you would wish should follow you, and not such as will prove your terror in the review.

"O happy church, if the physicians were but healed themselves! and if we had not too much

of that infidelity and stupidity which we daily preach against in others; and were more soundly persuaded of that which we persuade men of, and more deeply affected with the wonderful things wherewith we would affect them! Were there but such clear and deep impressions upon our souls of those glorious things that we daily preach, O what a change would it make in our sermons, and in our private course! O what a miserable thing it is to the church, and to themselves, that men must preach of heaven and hell before they soundly believe that there are such things; or have felt the weight of the doctrines which they preach! It would amaze a sensible man to think what matter we preach and talk of: what it is for the soul to pass out of this flesh, and go before a righteous God, and enter upon unchangeable joy or torment. O with what amazing thoughts do dying men apprehend those things! How should such matters be preached and discoursed of! O the gravity, the seriousness, the incessant diligence that these things require! I know not what others think of them, but, for my part, I am ashamed of my stupidity, and wonder at myself that I deal not with my own and others souls as one that looks for the great day of the Lord; and that I can have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly take me up. I marvel how I can preach of them slightly and coldly; and

how I can let men alone in their sins; that I do not go to them and beseech them, for the Lord's sake, to repent, however they take it, and whatever pains or trouble it should cost me. I seldom come out of the pulpit but my conscience smiteth that I have been no more serious and fervent in such a case.

It accuseth me not so much for want of human ornaments or elegancy, nor for letting fall an unhandsome word; but it asketh me;—'How couldst thou speak of life and death with such a heart? How couldst thou preach of heaven and hell in such a careless sleepy manner? Dost thou believe what thou sayest? Art thou in earnest or in jest? How canst thou tell people that sin is such a thing, and that so much misery is upon them and before them, and be no more affected with it? Shouldst thou not weep over such a people, and should not thy tears interrupt thy words? Shouldst thou not cry aloud and shew them their transgressions, and intreat and beseech them as for life and death?'—Truly this is the peal that conscience doth ring in my ears, and yet my drowsy soul will not be awakened. O what a thing is a senseless hardened heart! O Lord save us from the plague of infidelity and hard-heartedness ourselves, or else how shall we be fit instruments for saving others from it? O do that on our own souls which thou wouldst use us to do on the souls of others. I am even con-

founded to think what difference there is between my sickness-apprehensions, and my pulpit and discoursing apprehensions of the life to come; that ever that can seem so light a matter to me now, which seemeth so great and astonishing a matter then; and I know will do so again, when death looks me in the face, when yet I daily know and think of that approaching hour. And yet those forethoughts will not recover such working apprehensions.

" O brethren, sure if you had all conversed with neighbour death as oft as I have done, and as often received the sentence in yourselves, you would have an unquiet conscience, if not a reformed life in your ministerial diligence and fidelity; and you would have something within you that would frequently ask you such questions as these: — ' Is this all thy compassion on lost sinners? Wilt thou do no more to seek and to save them? Is there not such, and such, and such a one, O how many round about thee, that are yet the visible sons of death? What hast thou said to them or done for their recovery? Shall they die and be in hell before thou wilt speak to them one serious word to prevent it? Shall they curse thee for ever, that didst no more in time to save them?'—Such cries of conscience are daily in my ears, though the Lord knows I have too little obeyed them. The God of Mercy pardon me and awake me, with the rest

of his servants that have been thus sinfully negligent. I confess to my shame that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asketh me,—'What hast thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body?' Here is one more gone to judgment; what didst thou to prepare him for judgment?—And yet I have been slothful and backward to help the rest that do survive. How can you choose, when you are laying a corpse in the grave, but think with yourselves,—Here lieth the body, but where is the soul? and what have I done for it before it departed? It was part of my charge, what account can I give of it?—O sirs, is it a small matter to you to answer such questions as these? It may seem so now, but the hour is coming when it will not seem so.

"If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and will condemn us much more, even with another kind of condemnation than conscience doth. The voice of conscience now is a still small voice, and the sentence of conscience is a gentle sentence in comparison of the voice and sentence of God. Alas! conscience seeth but a very little of our sin and misery in comparison of what God seeth. What mountains would these things appear to your souls which now seem mole-hills! What beams would these be in your eyes that now seem motes, if you did but see them with a clearer light! I

dare not say as God seeth them. We can easily make shift to plead the cause with conscience, and either bribe it or bear its sentence; but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily borne. 'Wherefore, we receiving (and preaching) a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.' Heb. xii. ult."

DR. ISAAC WATTS.

The following extracts are taken from a work of Dr. Watts, entitled "An Humble Attempt toward the revival of Practical Religion among Christians; and particularly the Protestant Dissenters, by a serious address to Ministers and People, in some occasional discourses." The contents of the first part of this small volume, entitled "An Exhortation to Ministers," the author informs us, he intended to deliver at the ordination of Mr. John Oakes. But being prevented from doing so by indisposition, he committed to paper the observations he intended to address to the minister, who, when he saw them, earnestly pressed their publication.

The exhortation to ministers is founded on Col. iv. 17. "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."

The first extracts relate to

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL RELIGION IN THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

" Take heed, therefore, to your own practical and vital religion,—as to the truth, reality, and evidence of it,—as to the liveliness and power of it,—as to the growth and increase of it.

" I. Take heed to your own practical religion, as to the truth and reality of it, and the clear and undoubted evidence of it to your own conscience. Give double diligence to make your calling and election sure. See to it with earnest solicitude, that you be not mistaken in so necessary and important a concern; for a minister who preaches up the religion of Christ, yet has no evidence of it in his own heart, will lie under vast discouragements in his work; and if he be not a real Christian himself, he will justly fall under double damnation. Keep a constant holy jealousy over your own soul, lest while you preach to the eternal salvation of others, yourself become a castaway, or disapproved of God, and for ever banished from his presence. 1 Cor. ix. 27.

" Call your own soul often to account; examine the temper, the frame, and the motions of your heart with all holy severity, so that the evidences of your faith in Jesus, and your repentance for sin, and your conversion to God, be many and fair, be strong and unquestionable; that you may walk on with courage and joyful hope toward

heaven, and lead on the flock of Christ thither with holy assurance and joy.

" II. Take heed to your own religion, as to the liveliness and power of it. Let it not be a sleepy thing in your bosom, but sprightly and active, and always awake. Keep your own soul near God in the way in which you first came near him, *i. e.* by the mediation of Jesus Christ. Let no distance or estrangement grow between God and you, between Christ and you. Maintain much converse with God by prayer, by reading his word, by holy meditation, by heavenly-mindedness, and universal holiness in the frame and temper of your own spirit. Converse with God and with your own soul in the duties of secret religion, and walk always in the world as under the eye of God. Every leader of the flock of God should act as Moses did, should live as seeing him that is invisible. Heb. xi. 27.

" III. Take heed to your personal religion, as to the growth and increase of it. Let it be ever upon the advancing hand. Be tenderly sensible of every wandering affection toward vanity, every deviation from God and your duty, every rising sin, every degree of growing distance from God. Watch and pray much, and converse much with God, as one of his ministering angels in flesh and blood, and grow daily in conformity to God and your blessed Saviour, who is the first minister of his father's kingdom, and the fairest image of his father.

" Such a conduct will have several happy influences towards the fulfilling of your ministry, and will render you more fit for every part of your public ministrations.

" 1. Hereby you will improve in your acquaintance with divine things, and the spiritual parts of religion, that you may better teach the people both truth and duty. Those who are much with God may expect and hope that he will teach them the secrets of his covenant, and the ways of his mercy, by communications of divine light to their spirits. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant. Psalm xxv. 14. Luther used to say, that he got more knowledge in a short time by prayer sometimes, than by the study and labour of many hours.

" 2. Hereby you will be more fit to speak to the great God at all times, as a son with holy confidence in him as your father, and you will be better prepared to pray with and for the people. You will have an habitual readiness for the work, and increase in the gift of prayer. You will obtain a treasure and fluency of sacred language, suited to address God on all occasions.

" Hereby you will gain a freedom and interest at the throne of grace, and become a more powerful intercessor, for your people, under the influence of Jesus the great intercessor, who is ever near the throne; and be sure you improve your

interest in heaven, for the edification of those who are committed to your care.

"3. Hereby you will be kept near to the spring of all grace, to the fountain of strength and comfort in your work: you will be ever deriving fresh anointings, fresh influences, daily lights and powers, to enable you to go through all the difficulties and labours of your sacred office.

"4. Hereby, when you come among men in your sacred ministrations, you will appear, and speak, and act like a man come from God, like Moses with a lustre upon his face, when he had conversed with God, like a minister of the court of heaven employed in a divine office, like a messenger of grace who hath just been with God, and received instructions from him; and the world will take cognizance of you, as they did of the apostles, that they were men who had been with Jesus. Acts iv. 13.

"5. This will better furnish you for serious converse with the souls and consciences of men, by giving you experimental acquaintance with the things of religion, as they are transacted in the heart. You will learn more of the springs of sin and holiness, the workings of nature and grace, the deceitfulness of sin, the subtilty of temptation, and the holy skill of counter-working the snares of sin, and the devices of Satan, and all their designs to ruin the souls of men. You will speak with more divine compassion to wretched and perishing mortals, with more life and power

to stupid sinners, with more sweetness and comfort to awakened consciences, and with more awful language and influence to backsliding Christians.

"You will hereby learn to preach more powerfully in all respects for the salvation of men, and talk more feelingly on every sacred subject, when the power and sense and life of godliness are kept up in your own spirit. Then you may speak from your own experience, and borrow the language of David the prophet, and of St. Paul and St. John, two great apostles: 'I have believed, therefore I have spoken; what I have heard and learned from Christ I have declared unto you; what I have seen and felt I am bold to speak; attend and I will tell you what God has done for my soul.' You may then convince, direct, and comfort others by the same words of light and power, of precept and promise, of joy and hope, which have convinced, directed, and comforted you: a word coming from the heart will sooner reach the heart."

The following paragraphs relate to

A MINISTER'S PRIVATE STUDIES.

After speaking of other subjects of study, our author thus proceeds:—

"But amongst all these inquiries and studies, and these various improvements of the mind, let

us take heed that none of them carry our thoughts away too far from our chief and glorious design, that is the ministry of the gospel of Christ. Let none of them intrench upon those hours which should be devoted to our study of the Bible, or preparations for the pulpit: and wheresoever we find our inclination too much attached to any particular human science, let us set a guard upon ourselves, lest it rob us of our diviner studies, and our best improvement. A minister should remember, that himself with all his studies, is consecrated to the service of the sanctuary: let every thing be done, therefore, with a view to our great end: let all the rest of our knowledge be like lines drawn from the vast circumference of universal nature, pointing to that divine centre, God and religion: and let us pursue every part of science with a design to gain better qualifications thereby for our sacred work.

" 2dly, I come to speak of those particular studies which are preparative for the public work of the pulpit; and here, when you retire to compose a sermon, let your great end be ever kept in view, *i. e.* to say something for the honour of God, for the glory of Christ, for the salvation of the souls of men; and for this purpose a few rules may perhaps be of some service.

" One great and general rule is, ask advice of heaven by prayer about every part of your preparative studies; seek the direction and assist-

ance of the spirit of God, for inclining your thoughts to proper subjects, for guiding you to proper scriptures, and framing your whole sermon, both as to the matter and manner, that it may attain the divine and sacred ends proposed. But I insist not largely on this here, because prayer for aids and counsels from heaven belongs to every part of your work, both in the closet, in the pulpit, and in your daily conversation.

" The particular rules for your preparatory work may be such as these.

" I. In choosing your texts, or themes of discourse, seek such as are most suited to do good to souls, according to the present wants, dangers, and circumstances of the people; whether for the instruction of the ignorant, for the conviction of the stupid and senseless, for the melting and softening the obstinate, for the conversion of the wicked, for the edification of converts, for the comfort of the timorous and mournful, for gentle admonition of backsliders, or more severe reproof. Some acquaintance with the general case and character of your hearers is needful for this end.

" II. In handling the text, divide, explain, illustrate, prove, convince, infer, and apply in such a manner, as to do real service to men, and honour to our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not say within yourself, how much or how elegantly I can talk upon such a text, but what I can say most

usefully to those who hear me, for the instruction of their minds, for the conviction of their consciences, and for the persuasion of their hearts? Be not fond of displaying your learned criticisms in clearing up the terms and phrases of a text, where scholars only can be edified by them; nor spend away the precious moments of the congregation, in making them hear you explain what is clear enough before, and hath no need of explaining; nor in proving that which is so obvious that it wants no proof. This is little better than trifling with God and man.

"Think not how can I make a sermon soonest and easiest? but how I can make the most profitable sermon for my hearers: not what fine things I can say, either in a way of criticism or philosophy, or in a way of oratory and harangue, but what powerful words I can speak to impress the consciences of them that hear with a serious and lasting sense of moral, divine, and eternal things. Judge wisely what to leave out as well as what to speak. Let not your chief design be to work up a sheet, or to hold out an hour, but to save a soul.

"III. In speaking of the great things of God and religion, remember you are a minister of Christ and the gospel, sent to publish to men what God has revealed by his prophets and apostles and by his Son Jesus; and not a heathen philosopher to teach the people merely what the

light of reason can search out: you are not to stand up here as a professor of ancient or modern philosophy, nor an usher in the school of Plato or Seneca, or Mr. Locke, but as a teacher in the school of Christ, as a preacher of the New Testament. You are not a Jewish priest to instruct men in the precise niceties of the legal rites and ceremonies of ancient Judaism; but you are a Christian minister; let Christianity, therefore, run through all your composures, and spread its glories over them all."

Under the head of

THE COMPOSITION OF SERMONS

we have the following remarks:—

"If you speak of our natural knowledge of the attributes of God, and the truths of religion that reason dictates, show how they are all exalted, how brightly they shine in the gospel of Christ, and what new discoveries and new glories relating to them are derived from the holy scriptures.

"If you speak of the duties which men owe to God or to one another, even those which are found out by reason and natural conscience, show how the gospel of Christ hath advanced and refined every thing that nature and reason teach us: enforce these duties by motives of Christ-

ianity as well as by philosophical arguments drawn from the nature of things: stir up the practice of them by the examples of Christ and his apostles, by that heaven and that hell which are revealed to the world by Jesus Christ our Saviour: impress them on the heart by the constraining influences of the mercy of God, and the dying love of our Lord Jesus Christ, by his glorious appearance to judge the living and the dead, and by our blessed hope of attending him on that day. These are the appointed arguments of our holy religion and may expect more divine success.

" When you have occasion to represent what need there is of diligence and labour in the duties of holiness, show also what aids are promised in the gospel to humble and feeble souls who are sensible of their own frailty to resist temptations, or to discharge religious and moral duties; and what influences of the holy spirit may be expected by those who seek it. Let them know that Christ is exalted to send forth this spirit, to bestow repentance and sanctification as well as forgiveness, for without him we can do nothing. Acts v. 31. John xv. 5.

" If you would raise the hearts of your hearers to a just and high esteem of this gospel of grace, and impress them with an awful sense of the divine importance and worth of it, be not afraid to lay human nature low, and to represent it in its

ruins by the fall of the first Adam. It is the vain exaltation of ruined nature that makes the gospel so much despised in our age. Labour, therefore, to make them see and feel the deplorable state of mankind as described in scripture, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and a sentence of death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Let them hear and know that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; that there is none righteous, no, not one; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may appear guilty before God. Let them know that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any good thing; that we are without strength, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance and darkness of our understandings, and are by nature children of disobedience, and children of wrath; that we are unable to recover ourselves out of these depths of wretchedness without the condescensions of divine grace; and that the gospel of Christ is introduced as the only sovereign remedy and relief under all this desolation of nature, this overwhelming distress; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts iv. 12. And they that wilfully and obstinately reject this message of divine love, must perish without remedy and without hope; for there remains no

more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of vengeance. Heb. x. 26.

" By this conduct you will approve yourself to be a faithful messenger of Christ in good earnest, a minister of the New Testament, and a workman that needs not to be ashamed, if you take special seasons to discover to men what the word of God reveals concerning their misery, and declare to them the whole counsel of God for their salvation.

" I entreat you, my dear friend and brother, to get it deeply imprest on your heart, that as (I believe) your real and sincere design is to save the souls of men from sin and eternal death, so it is the gospel of Christ which is the only instrument whereby you can ever hope to attain this blessed end, and that for two reasons.

" Let me proceed yet further and say, had you the fullest acquaintance that ever man acquired with all the principles and duties of natural religion, both in its regard to God and to your fellow-creatures, had you the skill and tongue of an angel to range all these in their fairest order, to place them in their fullest light, and to pronounce and represent the whole law of God with such force and splendour to a British auditory as was done to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, you might perhaps lay the consciences of men under deep conviction, for by the law is the knowledge of sin: but I am fully persuaded you would never

reconcile one soul to God, you would never change the heart of one sinner, nor bring him into the favour of God, nor fit him for the joys of heaven, without this blessed gospel which is committed to your hands.

" The great and glorious God is jealous of his own authority, and of the honour of his Son Jesus; nor will he condescend to bless any other methods for obtaining so divine an end than what he himself has prescribed; nor will his holy spirit, whose office is to glorify Christ, stoop to concur with any other sort of means for the saving of sinners where the name and offices of his Son, the only appointed Saviour, are known, and despised and neglected. It is the gospel alone that is the power of God to salvation. If the prophets will not stand in his counsel, nor cause the people to hear his words, they will never be able to turn Israel from the iniquity of their ways, nor the evil of their doings. Jerem. xxiii. 22."

Referring to the great importance of preachers bringing prominently forward in their discourses, the leading doctrines of the gospel, our author thus expresses himself:—

" Let me here inquire, Are all the hearers that make up our public assemblies so well acquainted with the doctrines of Christ and the gospel in our day, that they have no need to be taught

them? Have they all enjoyed so happy an education from their infancy, as to understand the principles of the Christian religion, and the peculiar articles of the faith which are so necessary to restore sinners to a divine life? Do they so much as know that they are by nature dead in trespasses and sins? And do they know how to apply those vital truths to the blessed purposes of godliness? I am sure when we make particular inquiries we find many of them ignorant enough both of themselves and their Saviour, and they have need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, and the faith of Jesus.

"Wheresoever this gospel is published with clear and proper evidence, the belief of it is made necessary to salvation, and it is part of the commission of ministers to make known this to the people. Nor is there any thing else which can stand in the room and stead of this gospel, or attain those happy purposes for which this holy institution was designed. Unless, therefore, you have such an high esteem for the gospel of Christ, and such a sense of its divine worth and power as to take it along with you when you desire to save souls, you had better lay down the ministry and abandon your sacred profession; for you will but spend your strength for nought, and waste your breath in vain declamations: you will neither save your own soul, nor them that hear you; and you will have a terrible account to give at

the last day what you have done with this gospel which was intrusted with you for the salvation of men. You have hid this divine talent in the earth; you have traded entirely with your own stock; you have compassed yourself about with sparks of light of your own kindling, and you must lie down in sorrow with eternal loss.—

"I persuade myself that you all join with me in this sentiment, that if ever we are so happy as to reform the lives of our hearers, to convert their hearts to God, and to train them up for heaven, it must be done by the principles of the gospel of Christ. On the occasion of such an head of advice, therefore, I assure myself you will forgive these warm emotions of spirit. Can there be any juster cause or season to exert fervour and zeal, than while we are pleading for the name, and honour, and kingdom of our adored Jesus? Let him live, let him reign for ever exalted on his throne of glory; let him live upon our lips and reign in all our ministrations; let him live in the hearts of all our hearers; let him live and reign through Great Britain, and through all the nations, till iniquity be subdued, till the kingdom of Satan be destroyed, and the whole world are become willing subjects to the sceptre of his grace!

"IV. In addressing your discourse to your hearers, remember to distinguish the different characters of saints and sinners, the converted and the unconverted, the sincere Christian and

the formal professor, the stupid and the awakened, the diligent and backsliding, the fearful or humble soul, and the obstinate and presumptuous: and in various seasons introduce a word for each of them. Thus you will divide the word of God aright, and give every one their portion. 2 Tim. ii. 15.

" The general way of speaking to all persons in one view, and under one character, as though all your hearers were certainly true Christians, and converted already, and wanted only a little further reformation of heart and life, is too common in the world, but I think it is a dangerous way of preaching. It hath a powerful and unhappy tendency to lull unregenerate sinners asleep in security, to flatter and deceive them with dreams of happiness, and make their consciences easy without a real conversion of heart to God.

" Let your hearers know that there is a vast and unspeakable difference betwixt a saint and a sinner, one in Christ and one out of Christ; between one whose heart is in the state of corrupt nature or unrenewed, and one that is in a state of grace and renewed to faith and holiness; between one who is only born of the flesh, and is a child of wrath, and one who is born again, or born of the Spirit, and is become a child of God, a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven. Let them know that this distinction is great, and necessary; and it is not made (as some have imagined) by the

water of baptism, but by the operation of the word and spirit of God on the hearts of men, and by their diligent attendance on all the appointed means and methods of converting grace. It is a most real change, and of infinite importance; and however it has been derided by men, it is glorious in the eyes of God, and it will be made to appear so at the last day in the eyes of men and angels. But it will bring with it infinite terror to those who thought themselves safe in a common careless profession of Christianity, without any inward and divine change of heart.

" V. Lead your hearers wisely into the knowledge of the truth, and teach them to build their faith upon solid grounds. Let them know why they are Christians, that they may be firmly established in the belief and profession of the religion of Christ—that they may be guarded against all the assaults of temptation and infidelity in this evil day, and may be able to render a reason of the hope that is in them: furnish them with arguments in opposition to the rude cavils and blasphemies which are frequently thrown out in the world, against the name and doctrines of the holy Jesus.

" Let the great, the most important, and most necessary articles of our religion be set before your hearers in their fairest light. Convey them into the understandings of those of meanest capacity, by condescending sometimes to plain and fa-

miliar methods of speech; prove these important doctrines and duties to them by all proper reasons and arguments: but as to the introducing of controversies into the pulpit, be not fond of it, nor frequent in it. In your common course of preaching avoid disputes, especially about things of less importance, without an apparent call of providence. Religious controversies, frequently introduced without real necessity, have an unhappy tendency to hurt the spirit of true godliness, both in the hearts of preachers and hearers. 1 Tim. iv. 7.

"And have a care of laying too much stress on the peculiar notions and terms and phrases of the little sects and parties in Christianity. Take heed that you do not make your hearers bigots and uncharitable while you endeavour to make them knowing Christians. Establish them in all the chief and most important articles of the gospel of Christ, without endeavouring to render those who differ from you odious in the sight of your hearers. Whensoever you are constrained to declare your disapprobation of particular opinions, keep up and manifest your love to the persons of those who espouse them, and especially if they are persons of virtue and piety.

"VI. Do not content yourself to compose a sermon of mere doctrinal truths and articles of belief, but into every sermon, if possible, bring something practical. It is true, knowledge is the

foundation of practice; the head must be furnished with a degree of knowledge or the heart cannot be good: but take heed that dry speculations and mere schemes of orthodoxy do not take up too large a part of your composures; and be sure to impress it frequently on your hearers, that holiness is the great end of all knowledge, and of much more value than the sublimest speculations; nor is there any doctrine but what requires some correspondent practice of piety or virtue.

"And, among the practical parts of Christianity, sometimes make it your business to insist on those subjects which are inward and spiritual, and which go by the name of experimental religion. Now and then take such themes as these, viz. the first awakenings of the conscience of a sinner by some special and awful providence; by some particular passages in the word of God, in pious writings, or public sermons; the inward terrors of mind and fears of the wrath of God which sometimes accompany such awakenings; the temptations which arise to divert the mind from them, and to sooth up the sinner in the course of his iniquities; the inward conflicts of the spirit in these seasons; the methods of relief under such temptations; the arguments that may fix the heart and will for God against all the enticements and oppositions of the world; the labours of the conscience fluctuating between hope and fear; the rising and working of indwelling sin in the heart; the subtile excuses

framed by the flesh for the indulgence of it; the peace of God derived from the gospel, allaying the inward terrors of the soul under a sense of guilt; the victories obtained over strong corruptions and powerful temptations by the faith of unseen things—by repeated addresses to God in prayer—by trusting in Jesus, the great mediator, who is made of God to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

"While you are treating on these subjects, give me leave to put you again in mind that it will sometimes have a very happy influence on the minds of hearers, to speak what you have learnt from your own experience, or to tell them what you have borrowed from the experience of others, ancient or modern, who have passed through the same trials—who have wrestled with the same corruptions of nature—who have grappled with the same difficulties—and at last have been made conquerors over the same temptations. As face answers face in the glass, so the heart of one man answers to another, and the workings of the different principles of flesh and spirit, corrupt nature and renewing grace, have a great deal of resemblance in the hearts of different persons who have passed through them. This sort of instruction, drawn from just and solid experience, will animate and encourage the young Christian that begins to shake off the slavery of sin and to set his face toward heaven; this will make it appear

that religion is no impracticable thing; it will establish and comfort the professors of the gospel, and excite them with new vigour to proceed in the way of faith and holiness; it will raise a steadfast courage and hope, and will generally obtain a most happy effect upon the souls of the hearers beyond all that you can say to them from principles of mere reasoning and dry speculation; and especially where you have the concurrent experience of any scriptural examples.

"VII. Whether you are discoursing of doctrine or duty, take great care that you impose nothing on your hearers, either as a matter of faith or practice, but what your Lord and Master, Christ Jesus, has imposed. These are the limits of the commission which Christ gave to the first ministers of the gospel. Matth. xxviii. ult. Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them who are willing to become my disciples, and teach them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you. He has not given leave to his ministers, whether separate in their single congregations, or united in synods or councils, the least degree of power to appoint one new article of faith, nor to enjoin any new sort of devotion or practice, nor to impose any one rite or ceremony of worship but what he himself has framed and enjoined. And yet, to our universal reproach, there is scarce any party of Christians but hath been too ready to impose some doctrines upon the belief of their proselytes

which Christ has not imposed, or to require of them some practices or some abstinences, about meats or days, or things indifferent, which Christ has not required. It is this assuming power that has turned Christianity into an hundred shapes, and every one of them in some degree unlike the glorious gospel. It is this has brought in all the superstitions and fooleries, the splendid vanities, the useless austerities, and the childish trifles of the Greek and Roman churches; and it is this has too far corrupted the purity and defaced the beauty of most of those churches who boast of reformation, and wear the protestant name.

"To avoid the extremes into which we are apt to fall, permit me to give this general word of advice, and may God enable me to take it myself, viz. That in all our ministrations we keep a constant and religious eye upon the holy scripture, that in the necessary and most important points of doctrine or duty, we may teach our hearers neither more nor less than the scripture teaches. Our great business is to expound scripture, and enforce the word of God upon the minds and hearts of men: when, therefore, we explain the great and necessary points of the gospel contained in any one scripture, let us do it as much as possible by bringing other parts of scripture into the same view, that the word of God may be a comment on itself. When we have occa-

sion to make inferences from it, let us take care that the connexion of them be strong and evident, and that they lie not far off at a distance, for in very distant inferences we are more liable to mistake.

"VIII. Remember that you have to do with the understanding, reason, and memory of man, with the heart and conscience, with the will and affections; and, therefore, you must use every method of speech which may be most proper to engage and employ each of these faculties or powers of human nature on the side of religion, and in the interests of God and the gospel.

"Your first business is with the understanding, to make even the lower parts of your auditory know what you mean. Endeavour therefore to find out all the clearest and most easy forms of speech, to convey divine truths into the minds of men. Seek to obtain a perspicuous style and a clear and distinct manner of speaking, that you may effectually impress the understanding while you pronounce the words; that you may so exactly imprint on the mind of the hearers the same ideas which you yourself have conceived, that they may never mistake your meaning. This talent is sooner attained in younger years by having some judicious friend to hear or read over your discourses, and inform you where perspicuity is wanting in your language, and where the hearers may be in danger of mistaking your sense.

For want of this, some young preachers have fixed themselves in such an obscure way of writing and talking, as hath very much prevented their hearers from obtaining distinct ideas of their discourse. And if a man get such an unhappy habit, he will be sometimes talking to the air, and make the people stare at him as though he were speaking some unknown language.

"Remember you have to do with the reasoning powers of man in preaching the gospel of Christ; for though this gospel be revealed from heaven, and could never be discovered by all the efforts of human reason, yet it is the reason of man must judge of several things relating to it, viz. It is reason must determine whether the evidence of its heavenly original be clear and strong: it is reason must judge whether such a doctrine or such a duty be contained in this gospel, or may be justly deduced from it: it is the work of human reason to compare one scripture with another, and to find out the true sense of any particular text by this means.—Reason therefore hath its office and proper province even in matters of revelation; yet it must always be confessed, that some propositions may be revealed to us from heaven which may be so far superior to the limits and sphere of our reasoning powers in this present state, that human reason ought not to reject them, because it cannot fully understand them, nor clearly and perfectly reconcile them; unless

it plainly see a natural absurdity in them, a real impossibility, or a plain inconsistence with other parts of divine revelation.

"Well then, since you have to do with reasonable creatures in your sacred work, let your manner of speaking be rational, and your arguments and inferences just and strong, that you may effectually convince your hearers of the truth of what you deliver in your ministrations of the gospel.

"And in your representation of things to the reason and understanding of men, it would sometimes be of special advantage to have some power over the fancy or imagination: this would help us to paint our themes in their proper colours, whether of the alluring or the forbidding kind. And now and then we should make use of both, in order to impress the idea on the soul with happier force and success."

When you have occasion to speak of pride, envy, malice, revenge, and similar sins, "make it evident how contrary they are both to the law of God and the gospel of Christ; describe them in all their several forms, shapes, and appearances; strip them of their false pretences and disguises; show how they insinuate and exert themselves in different occurrences of life, and different constitutions; and pursue them so narrowly as it were by a hue and cry, with such exact descriptions, that if any of these vices are indulged by your

hearers, they may be found out by strict self-examination, that the consciences of the guilty may be laid under conviction of sin, and be set in the way of repentance and reformation.

" Whensover any vice has found the way into our bosoms, and made its nest there, its proper and evil features and characters had need to be marked out by the preacher with great accuracy, that it may be discovered to our consciences in order to its destruction: for these wretched hearts of ours are naturally so fond of all their own inmates, that they are too ready to hide their ill qualities from our own sight and conviction, and thus they cover and save them from the sentence of mortification and death, which is denounced against every sin in the word of God. And let the preacher and the hearer both remember, that sin must be pursued to the death, or else there is no life for the soul. It is only the Christian who, by the spirit, mortifies the sinful deeds of the body, has the promise of salvation and life. Rom. viii. 13.

" It would be a happy thing, if this vivacious and sprightly power of the fancy, which too often becomes an ingenious and successful tempter of the soul, to guilt, mischief, and ruin, might, by the art of the preacher, be gained over to the interests of virtue and goodness, and employed for God and salvation.

" Think further, that you should take some care also to engage the memory, and to make it serve the purposes of religion. Let your reasonings be never so forcible and convincing, let your language be never so clear and intelligible, yet if the whole discourse glide over the ears in a smooth and delightful stream, and if nothing be fixed in the memory, the sermon is in great danger of being lost and fruitless. Now, to avoid this danger, I would recommend to you the care of a clear and distinct method, and let this method appear to the hearers by the division of your discourses into several plain and distinct particulars, so that the whole may not be a mere loose harangue without evident members and discernible rests and pauses. Whatsoever proper and natural divisions belong to your subject, mark them out by the numbers 1st, 2d, 3d, &c. This will afford you time to breathe in the delivery of your discourse, and give your hearers a short season for recollection of the particulars which have been mentioned before.

" But in this matter take care always to maintain a happy medium, so as never to arise to such a number of particulars as may make your sermon look like a tree full of branches in the winter, without the beauteous and profitable appearance of leaves or fruit.

" Cast the scheme of your discourse into some distinct general heads and lesser sub-divisions in

your first sketches and rudiments of it. This will greatly assist you in the amplification, this will help you to preserve a just method throughout, and secure you from repeating the same thoughts too often. This will enable you to commit your sermon to your own memory the better, that you may deliver it with ease, and it will greatly assist the understanding, as well as the memory, of all that hear you. It will furnish them with matter and method for an easy recollection at home, for meditation in their devout retirement, and for religious conference or rehearsal after the public worship is ended.

"Consider again your business is with the consciences and wills and affections of men. A mere conviction of the reason and judgment by the strongest arguments is hardly sufficient in matters of piety and virtue to command the will into obedience, because the appetites of the flesh, and the interests of this world, are engaged on the opposite side. It is a very common case with the sons and daughters of Adam to see and know their proper duty, and to have the reasons that enforce it fresh in their memory, and yet the powerful efforts of the flesh and the world withhold the will from the practice, forbid its holy resolutions for God and heaven, or keep them always feeble, doubtful, and wavering. The God of nature therefore has furnished mankind with those powers which we call passions or affections of the

heart, in order to excite the will with superior vigour and activity to avoid the evil and pursue the good. Upon this account the preacher must learn to address the passions in a proper manner, and I cannot but think it a very imperfect character of a Christian preacher, that he reasons well upon every subject, and talks clearly upon his text, if he has nothing of the pathetic in his ministrations, no talent at all to strike the passions of the heart.

"Awaken your spirit therefore in your composures, contrive all lively, forcible, and penetrating forms of speech, to make your words powerful and impressive on the hearts of your hearers when light is first let into the mind. Practise all the awful and solemn ways of address to the conscience, all the soft and tender influences on the heart. Try all methods to rouze and awaken the cold, the stupid, the sleepy race of sinners; learn all the language of holy jealousy and terror to affright the presumptuous; all the compassionate and encouraging manners of speaking to comfort, encourage, and direct the awakened, the penitent, the willing, and the humble; all the winning and engaging modes of discourse and expostulation, to constrain the hearers of every character to attend. Seek this happy skill of reigning and triumphing over the hearts of an assembly. Persuade them with power to love and practise all the important duties of godliness in

opposition to the flesh and the world; endeavour to kindle the soul to zeal in the holy warfare, and to make it bravely victorious over all the enemies of its salvation.

"But in all these efforts of sacred oratory, remember still you are a minister of the gospel of Christ. And as your style must not affect the pomp and magnificence of the theatre, so neither should you borrow your expressions or your metaphors from the coarsest occupations, or any of the mean or uncleanly occurrences in life. Swell not the sound of your periods with ambitious or pedantic phrases, dress not your serious discourses to the people in too glittering array, with an affectation of gawdy and flaunting ornaments, nor ever descend to so low a degree of familiarity and meanness as to sink your language below the dignity of your subject or your office.

"IX. As the art of reasoning and the happy skill of persuasion are both necessary to be used in framing your discourses, so both of them may be borrowed in a good measure from the holy scriptures. The word of God will furnish you with a rich variety of forms both to prove and persuade. Clear instruction, convincing argument, and pathetic address to the heart, may be all drawn from the sacred writers. Many fine strokes of true logic and rhetoric are scattered through that divine book the Bible. Words of force and elegance to charm and allure the soul,

glitter and sparkle like golden ore in some peculiar parts of it. You may find there noble examples of the awful and compassionate style, and inimitable patterns of the terrible and the tender. Shall I therefore take the freedom once again to call upon you to remember that you are a minister of the word of God, a professor and preacher of the Bible, and not a mere philosopher upon the foot of reason, nor an orator in a heathen school?

"I am not here directing you to compose your whole sermons of nothing else but a perpetual connexion of texts of scripture,* nor to spend the whole hour in running from one text to another as a concordance or the margin shall point them out. Persons of low degrees of learning, who give themselves up to this method, have frequently introduced scripture in their discourses in a sense which the holy writers never thought of, and which the spirit of God never designed: and yet if a learned man would happily explain the more difficult parts of the word of God, perhaps it will be generally best done, and especially

* The late excellent Mr. Fuller of Kettering having heard a preacher deliver a sermon entirely composed of texts of scripture, strung together without any comment, observed, that such preachers reminded him of a person who should show him a basket of fine oranges.—If such a one should take up one orange after another, and say, there is one fine orange, and there is another, he should be disposed to reply yes: they all appear excellent; but I wish you would cut up one of them and let us taste the juice of it.—EDITOR.

in the pulpit, by comparing them with other texts which are more plain and easy. Scripture is the best interpreter of itself.

"As for argument to confirm a doctrine, or enforce a duty, you may borrow much of this from the word of God. It is true, when we speak of those subjects which belong to natural religion, we may very properly bring arguments from the nature of God and man, and from the reason of things, to show how necessary and reasonable it is to believe such a truth, or to practise such a virtue: nor is the scripture itself barren of such reasonings; and even in the peculiar articles of Christianity, it is a most excellent and useful design now and then to show how consistent and harmonious they are with reason, and how worthy of our faith and practice, since the word of God has revealed them, though they could not be found out by the light of nature. Yet these arguments, if they are long and laboured, and not immediately apprehended by the mind, are much more proper to be communicated to the world by writing than by speaking. There the reader may review and dwell upon an argument till he has grasped the whole chain, and admits all the connected inferences, and sees the undoubted evidence of the conclusion. But reasonings in the pulpit, for the most part, should be short and easy, that they may strike conviction into the mind almost as soon as they strike the ear, un-

less your hearers were all men of learning and refined education.

" But the bulk of our auditories, whether in the city or country, are not much profited by sermons merely made up of rational proofs of any doctrine or duty, deeply and laboriously deduced from the original springs and prime nature of things. They do not find their minds so much enlightened, nor their hearts warmed by a tedious train of connected inferences that are fetched from distant principles of nature and philosophy. This method, I confess, may entertain a few of the more rational, the more learned, or more polite persons in an auditory, who can survey and comprehend the sense of such discourses, and feel the force of such long chains of argumentation; and these persons, I own, ought to have due respect paid them in some parts of our ministry. Yet it is not the great business of a preacher of the gospel only to please the few, but to become all things to all men, and, if possible, to win a multitude of souls to Christ. The generality of our hearers have their lives filled up with the business of their station, and have little leisure or advantage to improve their understandings in the art of deep reasoning. These will yawn, and nod, and grow weary of the sermon; nor will such a preacher (though his discourses are never so much laboured,) profit the assembly any more than please them, if he goes on resolutely in this

way. Such a minister will quickly despise his hearers, and they will soon be tired with their preacher.

"I grant it is necessary to use good reason through your whole discourse, and connect all the parts of it with justice; but as I hinted before, let your arguments to prove any point be generally short and easy, and within the grasp of a common understanding. Remember that a few plain and obvious reasonings from familiar and well-known principles, and some clear and well-chosen texts of scripture, with a word or two to explain or apply them to the understanding and conscience of men with light and zeal, will impress the judgment and pierce the heart with more speedy and powerful conviction: and our hearers who regard a plain scriptural argument as the word of the living God, will much more readily receive it and submit much sooner to the force and authority of it. Thus saith the prophet, or thus saith the apostle, carries greater weight with it both to convince and to persuade, than a long series of demonstrations from remote principles.

"And as for bright, warm, and pathetic language to strike the imagination, or to affect the heart, to kindle the divine passions, or to melt the soul, there is none of the heathen orators can better furnish you than the moving expostulations of the ancient prophets, the tender and sprightly odes of holy David, or the affectionate part of the

letters of St. Paul, which even his enemies in the church of Corinth confess to be powerful. The eastern writers, among whom we number the Jews, were particularly famous for lively oratory, for bright images, and bold and animated figures of speech. Could I have heard Isaiah or Jeremy pronouncing some of their sermons, or attended St. Paul in some of his pathetic strains of preaching, I should never mourn a want of acquaintance with Tully or Demosthenes.

"A preacher whose mind is well stored and enriched with the divine sense and sentiments, the reasoning and the language of scripture, (and especially if these are wrought into his heart by Christian experience,) supposing his other talents are equal to those of his brethren, will always have a considerable advantage over them in composing such discourses, as shall be most popular and most useful in Christian assemblies; and he may better expect the presence and blessing of God to make his word triumph over the souls of men, and will generally speak to their hearts with more power for their eternal salvation. Show me one sinner turned to God and holiness by the labours of a Christian preacher who is generally entertaining the audience with a long and weighty chain of reasoning from the principles of nature, and teaching virtue in the language of heathen philosophy, and I think I may undertake to show you ten who have been convinced and converted,

and have become holy persons and lively Christians, by an attendance upon a scriptural, affectionate, and experimental ministry. The whole assembly hang attentive upon the lips of a man who speaks to the heart, as well as the understanding, and who can enforce his exhortations from his own experience of the success of them. They delight to hear the preacher whose plain and powerful addresses to the conscience, and whose frequent methods of reasoning in the pulpit have been drawn from what they themselves have read in scripture concerning God and man, sin and duty, our misery and divine mercy, death, resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell. They attend with holy reverence and affection on such a minister, whose frequent argument both in points of doctrine and practice is, Thus saith the Lord.

"X. Be not slothful or negligent in your weekly preparation for the pulpit; take due time for it; begin so early in the week that you may have time enough before you to finish your preparations well; and always allow for accidental occurrences, either from indisposition of body, from interruptions by company, from unforeseen business or trouble, &c. that you may not be reduced to the necessity of hurrying over your work in haste at the end of the week, and serving God and the souls of men with poor, cold, and careless performances. Remember that awful word, though spoken on another occasion. Jer. xlviii. 10.

'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.' Manage so as to leave generally the Saturday evening, or at least the Lord's day morning, entire for the review and correction of your discourse, and for your own spiritual improvement by the sermon which you have prepared for the people.

"If it should happen that the mere providence of God, without any neglect of yours, has hindered you from making so good a preparation as you designed, you may with courage and hope of divine assistance venture into the assembly with more slender and imperfect furniture. But if your conscience tells you that your preparations are very slight, and the neglect is all your own, you have less reason to expect aids from above without great humiliation for your negligence. And what if God should forsake you so far in the pulpit as to expose you to public shame, and thus punish you for your carelessness in the midst of the congregation?

"Study your matter well by meditation and reading, and comparing scriptures together, till you have gotten it completely within your grasp and survey: then if you should happen to be so situated in preaching, that you could not refresh your memory by the inspection of your paper every minute, yet you will not be exposed to hurry and confusion; a ready thought will suggest something pertinent to your purpose. Let your

preparations be usually so perfect that you may be able to fill up the time allotted for the discourse with solid sense, and proper language, even if your natural spirits should happen to be heavy and indisposed at the hour of preaching, and if your mind should have no new thoughts arising in the delivery of your discourse. Labour carefully in the formation of your sermons in younger years. A habit of thinking and speaking well, procured by the studies of youth, will make the labour of your middle age easy, when perhaps you will have much less time and leisure."

The author next calls upon his brethren

TO TAKE HEED TO THEIR PUBLIC LABOURS AND MINISTRATIONS IN THE CHURCH.

This, he observes, may be done by attending to the following particulars:—

"I. Apply yourself to your work with pious delight; not as a toil and task, which you wish were done and ended, but as matter of inward pleasure to your own soul. Enter the pulpit with the solemnity of holy joy, that you have an opportunity to speak for the honour of God and the salvation of men. Then you will not preach or pray with sloth or laziness—with coldness or indifference. We do not use to be slothful and

indifferent in the pursuit of our joys, or the relish of our chosen pleasures. Stir up yourself to the work with sacred vigour, that the assembly may feel what you speak. But if you deliver the most solemn and lively composures like a man that is half asleep, it will be no wonder if your hearers slumber. A dull preacher makes a drowsy church.

" II. Endeavour to get your heart into a temper of divine love, zealous for the laws of God, affected with the grace of Christ, and compassionate for the souls of men. With this temper engage in public work. Let your frame of spirit be holy with regard to your own inward devotion, near to God, and delighting in him. And let it be zealous for the name of Christ and the increase of his kingdom. O pity perishing sinners when you are sent to invite them to be reconciled to God. Let not self be the subject or the end of your preaching, but Christ and the salvation of souls. We preach not ourselves, saith the apostle, but Christ Jesus, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Cor. iv. 5. Speak as a dying preacher to dying hearers, with the utmost compassion to the ignorant, the tempted, the foolish, and the obstinate; for all these are in danger of eternal death. Attend your work with the utmost desire to save souls from hell, and enlarge the kingdom of Christ your Lord.

"Go into the public assembly with a design (if God please) to strike and persuade some souls there into repentance, faith, holiness, and salvation. Go to open blind eyes, to unstop deaf ears, to make the lame walk, to make the foolish wise, to raise those that are dead in trespasses and sins to a heavenly and divine life, and to bring guilty rebels to return to the love and obedience of their Maker, by Jesus Christ, the great reconciler, that they may be pardoned and saved. Go to diffuse the savour of the name of Christ, and his gospel, through a whole assembly, and to allure souls to partake of his grace and glory.

"III. Go forth in the strength of Christ, for these glorious effects are above your own strength, and transcend all the powers of the brightest preachers. Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. ii. 1. Without him we can do nothing. John xv. 5.

"Go with a design to work wonders of salvation on sinful creatures, but in the strength of Jesus, who hath all power given him in heaven and earth, and hath promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world. Matt. xxviii. 20. Pray earnestly for the promised aids of the Spirit, and plead with God who hath sent you forth in the service of the gospel of his Son, that you may not return empty, but bring in a fair harvest of converts to heaven. It is the Lord of the har-

vest who only can give this divine success to the labourers. He that plants is nothing, and he that waters is nothing, but all our hope is in God who giveth the increase.

" IV. Get the substance of the sermon which you have prepared for the pulpit so wrought into your head and heart by review and meditation, that you may have it at command, and speak to your hearers with freedom; not as if you were reading or repeating your lesson to them, but as a man sent to teach and persuade them to faith and holiness. Deliver your discourses to the people like a man that is talking to them in good earnest about their most important concerns, and their everlasting welfare; like a messenger sent from heaven, who would fain save sinners from hell, and allure souls to God and happiness. Do not indulge that lazy way of reading over your prepared paper, as a school-boy does an oration out of Livy or Cicero, who has no concern in the things he speaks. But let all the warmest zeal for God, and compassion for perishing men, animate your voice and countenance; and let the people see and feel, as well as hear, that you are speaking to them about things of infinite moment, and in which your own eternal interest lies as well as theirs.

" V. If you pray and hope for the assistance of the Spirit of God in every part of your work,

do not resolve always to confine yourself precisely to the mere words and sentences which you have written down in your private preparations. Far be it from me to encourage a preacher to venture into public work without due preparation by study and regular composure of his discourse. We must not serve God with what cost us nothing. All our wisest thoughts and cares are due to the sacred service of the temple. But what I mean is, that we should not impose upon ourselves just such a number of precomposed words and lines to be delivered in the hour, without daring to speak a warm sentiment that comes fresh upon the mind. Why may you not hope for some lively turns of thought, some new pious sentiments which may strike light, and heat, and life into the understandings and the hearts of those that hear you? In the zeal of your ministrations, why may you not expect some bright and warm and pathetic forms of argument or persuasion to offer themselves to your lips, for the more powerful conviction of sinners, and the encouragement and comfort of humble Christians? Have you not often found such an enlargement of thought, such a variety of sentiment and freedom of speech, in common conversation upon an important subject, beyond what you were apprized of beforehand? And why should you forbid yourself this natural advantage in the pulpit, and in the fer-

vour of sacred ministrations, where also you have more reason to hope for divine assistance?

" Why must we never dare to add any thing to our premeditated notes in speaking to the people, while we can take this freedom in speaking to the blessed God? As there has been many a fervent and devout petition offered to God in our addresses to him, which has not been thought of before, so many a sentence that was never written has been delivered in our addresses to the people with glorious success; it has come more immediate and warm from the heart, and may have been blest of God to save a soul.

" VI. Here would be a proper place to interpose a few directions concerning elocution, and the whole manner of delivery of your discourse to the people; which includes both a voice, gesture, and behaviour suited to the subject and design of every part of the sermon. But the rules that are necessary for this part of our work, are much better derived from books written on this subject, from an observation of the best preachers in order to imitate them, and an avoidance of that which we find offensive when we ourselves are hearers.

" VII. Be very solicitous about the success of all your labours in the pulpit. Water the seed sown not only with public but secret prayer. Plead with God importunately, that he would not

suffer you to labour in vain. Be not like that foolish bird the ostrich, which lays her eggs in the dust, and leaves them there, regardless whether they come to life or not. God hath not given her understanding. Job xxxix. 14—17. But let not this folly be your character or practice; labour, and watch, and pray that your sermons and the fruit of your studies may become words of divine life to souls.

"It is an observation of pious Mr. Baxter's, which I have read somewhere in his works, that he has never known any considerable success from the brightest and noblest talents, nor the most excellent kind of preaching, and that even where the preachers themselves have been truly religious, if they have not had a solicitous concern for the success of their ministrations. Let the awful and important thought of souls being saved by my preaching, or left to perish and be condemned to hell by my neglicence, I say, let this awful and tremendous thought dwell ever upon your spirit. We are made watchmen to the house of Israel, as Ezekiel was, Ezek. iii. 17, &c. and if we give no warning of approaching danger, the souls of multitudes may perish through our neglect, but the blood of souls will be terribly required at our hands."

The next section is entitled,

OF THE CONVERSATION OF A MINISTER.

On this subject our author observes,

" We are now come to the fourth and last thing which I proposed, in order to the fulfilling of your ministry, viz. take heed to your whole conversation in the world; let that be managed not only as becomes a professor of Christianity, but as becomes a minister of the gospel of Christ. Now, amongst other rules which may render your conversation agreeable to your character, I entreat you to take these few into your thoughts.

" I. Let it be blameless and inoffensive. Be vigilant, be temperate in all things, not only as a soldier of Christ, but as an under-leader of part of his army. Be temperate, and abstain sometimes even from lawful delights, that you may make the work of self-denial easy, and that you may bear hardship as becomes a soldier. 2 Tim. ii. 3. Be watchful or vigilant, lest you be too much entangled with the affairs of this life, that you may better please him who has chosen you for an officer in his battalions, and that you may not be easily surprised into the snares of sin. Guard against a love of pleasure, a sensual temper, an indulgence of appetite, an excessive relish of wine or dainties; this carnalizes the soul, and gives occasion to the world to reproach us but too justly.

" Watch carefully in all your conduct, that you give no offence, as far as possible, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the church of God, that so the ministry may not be blamed. 1 Cor. x. 32. 2 Cor. vi. 3. Maintain a holy jealousy over yourself and your conduct, that the name of Christ and his gospel suffer not the reproach of tongues and impious blasphemies through your means. Oh how dreadful is the mischief that a scandalous minister does to the gospel of our blessed Lord! What a fearful train of consequences may attend his indulgence of any sinful appetite, or any single criminal action, even though it be not repeated! What a fatal stumbling-block does he lay before the feet of saints and sinners! He turns away the heart of sinners from God and religion, who perhaps began to think of setting their faces toward heaven. He discourages the hearts of young Christians, and weakens the hands of all the friends of Christ. Woe be to the preacher by whom such offences come.

" II. Let your conversation be exemplary in all the duties of holiness and virtue—in all the instances of worship and piety toward God, and in those of justice, honour, and hearty benevolence towards men. Be forward and ready to engage in every good word and work, that you may be a pattern and a leader of the flock—that you may be able to address the people committed to your care in the language of the blessed apos-

tle, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ:—brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for ensample:—for our conversation is in heaven:—Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do you practise, and the God of peace shall be with you. 1 Cor. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 17, 20. Phil. iv. 9.

"III. Let your conversation be grave and manly, yet pleasant and engaging. Let it be grave, manly, and venerable. Remember your station in the church, that you sink not into levity and vain trifling—that you indulge not any ridiculous humours or childish follies, below the dignity of your character. Keep up the honour of your office among men by a remarkable sanctity of manners, by a decent and manly deportment. Remember that our station does not permit any of us to set up for a buffoon; nor will it be any glory to us to excel in farce and comedy. Let others obtain the honour of being good jesters, and of having it in their power to spread a laugh round the company when they please. But let it be our ambition to act on the stage of life as men who are devoted to the service of the God of heaven, to the real benefit of mankind on earth, and to their eternal interests.

"Yet there is no need that your behaviour should have any thing stiff or haughty, any thing sullen or gloomy in it. There is an art of pleas-

ing in conversation that will maintain the honour of a superior office without a morose silence, without an affected stiffness, and without a haughty superiority. A pleasant story may proceed without offence from a minister's lips, but he should never aim at the title of a man of mirth, nor abound in such tales as carry no useful instruction in them, no lessons of piety, or wisdom, or virtue.

" Let a cheerful freedom, a generous friendship, and an innocent pleasure generally appear on your countenance; and let your speech be ever kind and affectionate. Do not put on any forbidding airs, nor let the humblest soul be afraid to speak to you. Let your whole carriage be civil and affable; let your address to men be usually open and free, such as may allure persons to be open and free with you in the important concerns of their souls. Seek as far as possible to obtain all your pious designs by soft and gentle methods of persuasion.

" If you are ever called to the unpleasing and painful work of reproof, this may be done effectually upon some occasions without speaking a word. When vicious, or uncleanly, or unbecoming speeches arise in public conversation, a sudden silence, with an assumed gravity, will often be a sensible and sufficient reproof. Or where words of admonition may not be proper because of the company, sometimes a sudden departure

may be the best way to acquaint them with your disapprobation.

" But there are cases wherein such a tacit rebuke is not sufficient to answer your character and your office. Sometimes it is necessary for a minister to bear a public and express witness against shocking immorality, or against vile and impious discourse. Yet in general it must be said, if a reproof can be given in secret, it is best, and most likely to prevail upon the offender, because it less irritates his passions, nor awakens his pride to vindicate himself, and to despise all reproof.

" Whensoever providence calls you to this work, make it appear to the transgressor that you do it with regret and pain. Let him see that you are not giving vent to your own wrath, but seeking his interest and welfare; and that were it not for the honour of God, and for his good, you would gladly excuse yourself from the ungrateful task; and that it is a work in which your spirit takes no delight. If the case and circumstances require some speeches that are awful and severe, let it appear still that your love and pity are the prevailing passions, and that even your anger has something divine and holy in it, as being raised and pointed against the sin rather than against the sinner.

" Study to make the whole of your carriage and discourse amongst men so engaging as may

invite even strangers to love you, and allure them to love religion for your sake.

" IV. In order to attain the same end, let your conversation be attended with much self-denial and meekness. Avoid the character of a humourist, nor be unreasonably fond of little things, nor peevish for the want of them. Suppress rising passion early. If you are providentially led into argument and dispute, whether on themes of belief or practice, be very watchful lest you run into fierce contention, into angry and noisy debate. Guard against every word that savours of malice or of bitter strife. Watch against the first stirrings of sudden wrath or resentment. Bear with patience the contradiction of others, and forbear to return railing for railing. A minister must be gentle, and not apt to strive, but meekly instructing gainsayers.

" He should never be ready either to give or take offence, but he should teach his people to neglect and bury resentment, to be deaf to reproaches, and to forgive injuries, by his own example, even as God has forgiven all of us. Let us imitate his divine pattern who cancels and forgives our infinite offences for the sake of Jesus Christ. A bishop must not be a brawler or a striker, but such as the apostle was, gentle among the people, even as a nurse cherishes her children; and being affectionately desirous of their welfare, we should be willing to impart not only the gos-

pel of God to them, but any thing that is dear to us, for the salvation of their souls.

" Never suffer any differences, if possible, to arise between you and any of the people who are committed to your care, or attend on your ministrations. This will endanger the success of your best labours among them, and for this reason, though you visit families with freedom, yet avoid all unnecessary inquiries into their domestic affairs by a prying curiosity; the pleasure of such secrets will never pay for the danger that attends them, and your own business is sufficient for you.

" Avoid entering into any of the little private and personal quarrels that may arise among them, unless Providence give you an evident call to become a peace-maker. But even in this blessed work there is some danger of disobliging one side or the other; for though both sides are often to blame, yet each supposes himself so much in the right, that your softest and most candid intimation of their being culpable even in little things, will sometimes awaken the jealousy of one or both parties against you; this will tend to abate their esteem of you, and give a coldness to their attention on your sacred services. We had need be wise as serpents in this case, and harmless as doves.

" V. Let your conversation be as fruitful and edifying as your station and opportunities will allow. Wheresoever you come, endeavour, if pos-

sible, that the world may be the better for you. If it be the duty of every Christian, much more is it the indispensible duty of a minister of Christ, to take heed that no corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth, but that which is good for edification, that it may minister grace to the hearers. Ephes. iv. 29.

" In your private visits to the members of your flock, or to the houses of those who attend on your ministry, depart not, if possible, without putting in some word for God and religion, for Christ and his gospel. Take occasion from common occurrences that arise artfully and insensibly to introduce some discourse of things sacred. Let it be done with prudence and holy skill, that the company may be led into it ere they are aware. The ingenious Mr. Norris's little Discourse of Religious Conversation, and Mr. Matthew Henry's Sermon of Friendly Visits, have many excellent and valuable hints in them for our use.

It is to be confessed, that the best of ministers and Christians sometimes fall into such company, that it is hardly possible to speak a word for God and the gospel among them. Try then whether you cannot introduce a word of human virtue, of goodness, meekness, humility, or temperance. Try whether you cannot lead the discourse to some useful theme in matters of science, art, and ingenuity, or to rules of prudence, morality, or

human conduct. There is a time of keeping silence, and restraining our lips as with a bridle, even from every thing that is piously good, while some sort of wicked men stand before us. The best men are sometimes dumb with silence, and dare not speak of God or religion, lest they should cast their pearls before swine, and give their holy things to dogs, and lest they should provoke the unclean or the envious animals to foam out their impurities, or to turn again and rend them. But I doubt this caution has been carried much further by our own cowardice and carnality of spirit, than David ever practised it in the 39th Psalm, or than Jesus Christ meant it in the 7th of Matthew. Let us take heed then that we abuse not this prudent caution to a manifest neglect of our duty, and to withhold our lips from the things of God, where providence gives us a fair opportunity to speak of them.

" Now and then take occasion to speak a kind and religious word to the children of the household; put them in mind of avoiding some childish folly, or of practising some duty that belongs to their age. Let your memory be well furnished with the words of scripture, suited to the several ages of mankind, as well as to the various occasions of life, that out of the abundance of the heart your mouth may speak to the advantage of all that hear you, and particularly improve the younger parts of mankind, who are the hopes of

the next generation. Make the lambs of the flock love you, and hear your voice with delight, that they may grow up under your instruction to fill up the room of their fathers when they are called away to heaven. Nor let servants be utterly neglected, where providence may afford you an opportunity to speak a word to their souls.

"Learn what are the spiritual circumstances of the families whom you visit, and address them with a word in season where you can have proper opportunity. Converse personally with them, if you can, about their eternal concerns. Let the ease and gentleness of your addresses to them, in a natural and familiar way, take off all that shy and bashful tincture from their minds, that is ready to prevent their uttering a word about the concern of their souls. Inquire tenderly into their state with regard to God. Draw sinners by words of compassion to repent of their crimes, to return to God, and to trust in Jesus the Saviour. Teach Christians sincerely to love and practise duty, and to endure with honour the trials of life. Teach them to be sick and die as becomes the disciples of Christ. Treasure up your own experiences of divine things, not only as matters of delightful review in your own retirements, and for the encouragement of your own hope, but as lessons to be taught your people upon all proper occasions. Whether you are afflicted, or whether

you are comforted, let it be for their consolation and salvation. 2 Cor. i. 6.

" A minister, whose business and known employment is to speak of the things of God, should never be ashamed to impart divine knowledge, or to exhort to holiness with his lips, and to preach the word of the gospel of grace, whether the world calls it in season or out of season. 2 Tim. iv. 1. He that has the happy talent of parlour preaching has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit. Our character should be all of a piece, and we should help forward the success of our public ministrations by our private addresses to the hearts and consciences of men, where providence favours us with just occasions.

" In order to promote this work of particular watchfulness over the flock of Christ, where he has made you a shepherd and overseer, it is useful to keep a catalogue of their names, and now and then review them with a pastoral eye and affection. This will awaken and incline you to lift up proper petitions for each of them, so far as you are acquainted with their circumstances in body or mind. This will excite you to give thanks to God on account of those who walk as becomes the gospel, and who have either begun, or pro-

ceeded and increased in the Christian life and temper by your ministry. You will observe the names of the negligent and backsliding Christians, to mourn over them and admonish them. You will be put in mind how to dispose of your time in Christian visits, and learn the better to fulfil your whole ministry among them.

"I shall enlarge no farther in the enumeration of our duties, which would easily swell into a volume, if they were set before our eyes in their full extent. But in general, I say, these are the methods whereby we must take heed to ourselves, if we would fulfil the ministry that we have received of Christ. To supply what I have omitted, read frequently and with holy attention the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, which will furnish you richly with directions for your work."*

The following extracts are from the last section of that part of Dr. Watts's publication

* Here our author particularly recommends the Life of Dr. Cotton Mather of New England. A new edition of this excellent little work has lately been published in Edinburgh, along with that of Joseph Alleine, as forming the first volume of an intended series of reprints of some of the more useful publications of a former age. This volume is entitled Village Library, No. I. No. II. has very recently left the press. It contains a valuable small work of Nathanael Vincent on the Spirit of Prayer, with some other extracts on the same subject.—EDITOR.

which relates to ministers, and which is entitled,

A SOLEMN ENFORCEMENT OF THESE EXHORTATIONS ON THE CONSCIENCE.

"The things which I have spoken hitherto have been a display of the best methods I can think of for the execution of the sacred office of the ministry. And so far as they are conformable to the word of God, we may venture to say, these are your duties, my dear brother, and these are ours. It remains now to be considered in what manner shall we enforce them on our own consciences and on yours? What solemn obtestations shall I use to press these momentous concerns on all our hearts? What pathetic language shall I choose, what words of awful efficacy and divine fervour, which may first melt our spirits into softness, and then imprint these duties upon them with lasting power? We exhort and charge you, we exhort and charge ourselves, by all that is serious and sacred, by all that is important and everlasting, by all the solemn transactions between God and man which are past, and by all the more solemn and awful scenes which are yet to come, by all things in our holy religion which are dreadful and tremendous, and by all things in this gospel which are glorious and amiable, heavenly and divine; we charge you by all that is written in this book of God, according

to which we shall be judged in the last day, by all the infinite and astonishing glories and terrors of an invisible world and an unseen eternity, we charge and exhort you, we exhort and charge ourselves, that we all take heed to the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus that we fulfil it. But let us descend to more particular forms of solemn exhortation, which perhaps may strike our consciences in a more sensible manner, and print the duties deeper upon our hearts.

" *First*, then, we exhort and charge you, we charge and exhort our own souls, by all the ancient transactions between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinful men, by all the eternal counsels of peace that passed between them to recover lost mankind to the favour and image of his Maker, that we preach this gospel with faithfulness, and be instant in the sacred work. It is the effect of these divine counsels that we publish to sinners; it is the merciful product of this sacred covenant of redemption that we are sent to proclaim to a lost world. This is the gospel which is put into our hands. God grant we may speak as becomes creatures intrusted with messages of such a heavenly original, with affairs of such divine solemnity.

" *Secondly*, We exhort and charge you, and we would charge ourselves to fulfil our ministry, by the invaluable treasure of this gospel which is put into our hands, by that word of life which is

committed to our ministration. Let us speak with such a serious zeal as becomes the oracles of God and the embassies of his mercy, with such compassion to dying souls as is manifested in this gospel of love, with such inward fervour and holy solicitude for the success of our labours, that if it were possible not the soul of one sinner within the reach of our preaching might miss of this pardoning mercy and eternal joy. Oh let us not dare to trifle with God or men. Let us not be cold and lifeless in pronouncing the words of everlasting life, nor lazy and indolent in carrying these errands of divine love to a lost and perishing world.

" *Thirdly*, We charge and beseech you, and we charge ourselves, by the mercies of the living God which we hope both you and we have tasted, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we hope we have felt and received, that you and we proclaim these mercies with a sacred zeal, and that in the name of God and of our Lord Jesus we offer them to a miserable world with holy importunity.

" If ever we have known this wondrous compassion of God to ourselves, if ever we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, let us remember the relish we have had of this infinite compassion and condescending grace, when we were perishing under the power and guilt of sin; and with an imitation of that divine pity, let us entreat sinners

to be saved. Let us remember all the alluring charms, the heavenly sweetnesses of forgiving, sanctifying, and saving grace; and do our utmost to set them all before sinners in the most inviting light, that we may win sinful men to accept of the same salvation.

"*Fourthly*, We exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the dear and glorious name of our blessed Jesus, whose servants we are—whose name we bear—whose authority gives us commission—and who hath chosen us to be the ministers of his grace, the messengers of his dying love to the sons of men; we charge and beseech you to take care of the honour of his name in your ministrations, for we are sent forth to display before the eyes of the world the unsearchable riches of Christ. We are intrusted to spread abroad the honours of his name. O let us labour and strive that our zeal bear some proportion to the dignity of our trust, and let us take heed that we do nothing unworthy of our great and glorious master in heaven, who dwells at the right hand of God; nothing unworthy of that holy and illustrious name in which we are sent forth to preach this gospel, and to enlarge his kingdom. He has set us up as lights upon a hill in this sinful world, this benighted part of his dominion; let us burn and shine to his honour. He has assumed and placed us as stars in his right hand, let us shine and burn gloriously, that we may

give light to a midnight world. O that we may point out to them the morning star, that we may bring them under the beams of the rising sun of righteousness, and guide them in the way to the hills of paradise and everlasting joy!

"*Fifthly*, We beseech and charge you, while we charge ourselves, by the inestimable value of the blood of Christ, which purchased this salvation, that you and we display this illustrious and costly purchase to sinful perishing creatures; this precious blood, which is sufficient to redeem a world from death, and which is the price of all our infinite and everlasting blessings, demands that we publish and offer them in his name, with holy zeal and solicitude, to sinful men. Oh may our hearts and our lips join to proclaim this redemption, this salvation, these everlasting blessings, with such a devout and sacred passion as becomes the divine price that was paid for them. Let us not be found triflers with the blood of Christ, nor let us bring cold hearts and dead affections when we come to set before sinners the rich and inestimable stream of that life and blood that comes warm from the heart of the dying Son of God. Let perishing creatures know that it cost the prince of glory such a dreadful price as this to redeem them from eternal misery; and at the same time let our own spirits feel the powerful workings of gratitude to the divine friend that

bled and died for us, and let our language make it appear that we speak what we feel.

"*Sixthly*, We entreat you, with all tenderness, and with holy solemnity and fear,—we charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the invaluable worth of perishing souls, that we fulfil all our ministry with a concern of heart equal to so important a case. How can we dare to speak with lifeless lips, with cold language, or a careless air, when we are sent to recover immortal souls from the brink of everlasting death? Oh let it never be said that such or such a soul was lost for ever through our carelessness, through our coldness, through our sinful sloth in publishing the offers of recovering grace. How tremendous and painful will such a thought be to our hearts! How dreadful the anguish of it to the awakened conscience of a drowsy preacher!

"*Seventhly*, We charge you solemnly, and we charge ourselves, by the honour that Christ has done to us in times past, and has done to you this day, by the dignity of that office with which we have been formerly invested, and which you have this day received, that neither you nor we do any thing unbecoming this honourable character. Does Jesus, the divine shepherd, appoint us under-shepherds of his flock; are we constituted stewards in his house, to dispense the mysteries of his grace, and the good things of his gospel; are we the messengers of our risen Lord

to a dying world; are we the ministers of our exalted Saviour in his kingdom here below; are we the stars in his right hand; are we the earthly angels of his churches? Oh let us take heed that we do nothing to disgrace the titles of dignity and honour which he has put upon us in his word. Let us remember that every dignity brings an equal duty with it; and by fulfilling the various and difficult duties of our holy station, let us make it appear that our office was not conferred upon us in vain.

"It behoves us well to remember, that a blemish upon the name of a minister, arising from his own criminal conduct, brings a foul and lasting scandal upon the office itself, and upon the gospel of our glorified Lord, in whose name we act: and he will not fail to resent it.

"*Eighthly*, We exhort and charge you, therefore, my dear brother, by all the sacred solemnities of this day—by the vows of God which you have this day taken upon yourself, and the bond wherewith you have bound your soul; and we would each of us charge our own consciences, by our own former solemn vows, that neither you nor we ever suffer ourselves to forget or disregard our holy and powerful engagements; that we be awake at all times to fulfil our work, and that we never indulge low and trifling thoughts of what has formerly appeared to us, and what this day appears to you of such awful importance. Oh let

us ever refresh upon our spirits the serious and important transactions of that day wherein we gave up ourselves to Christ in the sacred service of his church. Let us often review the vows of these remarkable seasons of our life, and renew and confirm them before the Lord.

" *Ninthly*, We charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the decaying interest of religion, and the withering state of Christianity at this day, that we do not increase this general and lamentable decay, this growing and dreadful apostacy, by our slothful and careless management of the trust which is committed to us. It is a divine interest indeed, but declining; it is a heavenly cause, but among us it is sinking and dying. Oh let us stir up our hearts, and all that is within us, and strive mightily in prayer and in preaching to revive the work of God, and beg earnestly that God, by a fresh and abundant effusion of his own spirit, would revive his own work among us. Revive thy own work, O Lord, in the midst of these years of sin and degeneracy, nor let us labour in vain. Where is thy zeal, O Lord, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies? Are they restrained? O let us rouse our souls with all holy fervour to fulfil our ministry, for it will be a dreadful reproach upon us, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, if we let the cause of Christ and godliness die under our

hands for want of a lively zeal, and pious fervour and faithfulness in our ministrations.

" *Tenthly*, We entreat, we exhort, and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the solemn and awful circumstances of a dying bed, and the thoughts of conscience in that important hour when we shall enter into the world of spirits, that we take heed to the ministry which we have received. Surely that hour is hastening upon us, when our heads will lie on a dying pillow. When a few more mornings and evenings have visited our windows, the shadows of a long night will begin to spread themselves over us. In that gloomy hour conscience will review the behaviour of the days that are past—will take account of the conduct of our whole lives—and will particularly examine our labours and cares in our sacred office. Oh may we ever dread the thoughts of making bitter work for repentance in that hour, and of treasuring up terrors for a deathbed by a careless and useless ministry.

" *Eleventhly*, We exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by our gathering together before the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the solemn account we must there give of the ministry with which he hath intrusted us, that we prepare by our present zeal and labour to render that most awful scene peaceful to our souls, and the issue of it joyful and happy. Let us look

forward to that illustrious and tremendous appearance, when our Lord shall come with ten thousands of his holy angels to inquire into the conduct of men, and particularly of the ministers of his kingdom here on earth. Let us remember that we shall be examined in the light of the flames of that day, What we have done with his gospel which he gave us to preach? What we have done with his promises of rich salvation which he sent us to offer in his name? What is become of the souls committed to our care? Oh that we may give up our account with joy and not with grief, to the judge of the living and the dead, in that glorious, that dreadful and decisive hour.

" *Twelfthly*, We charge and warn you, my dear brother, and we warn and charge ourselves, by all the terrors written in this divine book, and by all the indignation and vengeance of God which we are sent to display before a sinful world, by all the torments and agonies of hell which we are commissioned to denounce against impenitent sinners, in order to persuade men to turn to God and receive and obey the gospel, that we take heed to our ministry that we fulfil it. This vengeance and these terrors will fall upon our souls, and that with intolerable weight, with double and immortal anguish, if we have trifled with these terrible solemnities, and made no use of these awful scenes to awaken men to lay hold

of the offered grace of the gospel. Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, let us persuade men, for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive according to our works. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

"In the *last* place, We entreat, we exhort, and charge you, by all the joys of paradise, and the blessings of an eternal heaven, which are our hope and support under all our labours, and which, in the name of Christ, we offer to sinful perishing men, and invite them to partake thereof. Can we speak of such joys and glories with a sleepy heart and indolent language? Can we invite sinners who are running headlong into hell to return and partake of these felicities, and not be excited to the warmest forms of address, and the most lively and engaging methods of persuasion? What scenes of brightness and delight can animate the lips and language of an orator, if the glories and the joys of the Christian heaven and our immortal hopes cannot do it? We charge and entreat you, therefore, and we charge ourselves, by the shining recompences which are promised to faithful ministers, that we keep this glory ever in view, and awaken our dying zeal in our sacred work. There is a crown of righteousness laid up for those who have fought the good fight, who have finished their course, who have kept the faith. 2 Tim. iv. 7. There is a glory which is to be revealed, a crown of glory which fadeth

not away, prepared for every under-shepherd who shall feed the flock of God under his care, and be found faithful in his work. When the great shepherd shall appear, he himself will bestow it on them. O let us look up continually to this immortal crown. Let us shake off our sluggishness, and rouse all our active powers at the prospect of this felicity. Let us labour and strive with all our might, that we may become possessors of this bright reward."

REV. JOSEPH ALLEINE.

The following extracts are taken from the account given of the life of the Rev. Joseph Alleine, A. B. minister of the gospel at Taunton, Somersetshire. This eminent servant of Christ is well known by his tract entitled An Alarm to the Unconverted. He lived during the period when many of the most faithful ministers suffered persecution simply for preaching the gospel. On this account he was repeatedly imprisoned, and his excellent wife, Theodosia Alleine, to whom we are chiefly indebted for this account of his life, was on these occasions the voluntary companion of his bonds. Mr. Alleine was eminently distinguished for personal godliness and ministerial fidelity. The whole account of his life is extremely interesting. I only extract such parts of it as more immediately relate to the design of this volume.

The following observations are from

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS GODLY LIFE AND PRACTICE, AND OF THE COURSE OF HIS MINISTRY IN TAUNTON, GIVEN BY MR. GEORGE NEWTON, THE REVEREND PASTOR THERE, WHOSE ASSISTANT HE WAS.

"In the houses where he sojourned, their hands fed one, but his lips fed many; God freely poured grace into his lips, and he freely poured it out. None could live quietly in any visible and open sin, under his inspection. When he came to any house to take up his abode there, he brought salvation with him; when he departed, he left salvation behind him. His manner was, when he was ready to depart, and to transplant himself into some other family, (as the exigence of his condition and the time did more than once constrain him to,) to call the people one by one into his chamber; from whence, it was observed, that scarce any one returned with dry eyes.

"In matters of religion, and the first table, his strictness was so exemplary, (which was near to rigour,) that I have scarce known any one of his years keep pace with him.

"But here he stayed not, he was *a second-table man*, a man of morals. I never knew him spotted in the least degree with any unjust or uncharitable action. And I am sure, the many failings of professors in this kind touched him to the very

quick, and brought him low; drew prayers, tears, complaints, and lamentations, both by word and letter, from him, though yet the Lord would not permit him to behold and reap the fruit before he died.

"His charity began at home, but it did not end there; for 'he did good to all, according to his opportunities, though especially to the household of faith.' He considered the poor—he studied their condition—he devised liberal things—he was full of holy projects, for the advancement of the good of others, both spiritual and temporal; which he pursued with such irresistible vigour, and zeal, and activity, that they seldom proved abortive.

"He was a man of extraordinary condescension to the infirmities of weaker brethren, as they that are most holy and best acquainted with themselves are wont to be: 'instructing those that were contrary minded in meekness; if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: restoring those who were overtaken with a fault with the spirit of meekness:' so dealing with them in such a loving, sweet, and humble way, as considering himself, lest he also might be tempted. In their confessed failings, he was no way supercilious, captious, and censorious; he would maintain a good opinion of another, upon a narrower footing than many others, who, to say no more, were nothing

stricter, holier, humbler, than himself would be. His charity 'believed all things' that were to be believed, and 'hoped all things' that were to be hoped. And when he deeply condemned the action, he would not judge of the estate: indeed he had more charity for others than himself; and though he were sufficiently mild in his judgment of others, he was severe enough in his judgment of himself.

"He was not peremptory in matters that belong to doubtful disputations: he laid no more weight and stress on notions and opinions in religion, that wholly depend upon topical arguments, than belongs to them. He was not like many, who are so over-confident in their determinations, that they will hardly hold communion, nay, scarce so much as a pleasing conversation with any man, how gracious soever, who cannot think, and say, and act in every thing as they do. He would allow his fellow-members the latitude that the apostle does, and so would freely and familiarly converse with those who are sound in the faith, as to the fundamentals of religion, and who were strict and holy in their lives, of all persuasions.*

*The Editor is happy to introduce here, in a note, the following additional testimony from an intimate friend of Mr. Alleine's, tending to show the truly catholic spirit, as well as the eminent piety of this distinguished man :—

" He was infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls, wherein he had no small success in the time of his ministry. And to this end he poured out his very heart in prayer and preaching; 'he imparted not the gospel only, but his own soul.' His supplications, and his exhortations, many times were so affectionate, so full of holy zeal, life, and vigour, that they quite overcame his hearers. He melted over them, so that he thawed, and mollified, and sometimes dissolved the hardest hearts. But while he melted thus, he wasted, and at last consumed himself.

" He was not satisfied to spend himself in public, but used constantly to go from house to house, and there to deal particularly, where he had a free reception, both with the governors, and with the children, and with the servants of the household, instructing them especially in the great fundamental necessary truths of the law, and of the gospel, where he observed them to be ignorant: gently reproving them where he found any thing amiss among them. Exhorting them to diligence,

" His pure and sacred love wrought in him a great spirit of charity and meekness to men of other judgments and persuasions, and great affection towards all such in whom he found any spiritual good. His zeal was all of a building, and no destroying nature; he had too much wisdom to esteem his own thoughts to be the standard of all other men's. His clear light and pure heart made him of a more discerning, substantial, and divine temper, than to reject any, in whom charity could see any thing of a new nature, for differing from him in the modes or forms of discipline or worship, or in disputable points."

both in their general and particular callings: entreating them who were defective, by any means to set up the worship of God in their houses, and to make them little churches, by constant reading of the scripture, so that the word of Christ might deeply dwell among and in them richly, by carefully catechising the children and the servants, if the governors were able; by frequent meditations, conferences, repetitions of that which they had heard in public, especially by daily prayer, morning and evening, that so they might avoid that dreadful indignation which hangs over, and is ready to be poured out upon the families that call not upon God. He made the best inspection that he could into the state of every particular person; and so accordingly applied himself to check, to comfort, to encourage, as he found occasion. All which he did with so much tenderness, humility, and self-denial, that they gained very much on the affections and respect of all that received him, and wrought them at least to outward conformity: so that they who were not visited in the beginning, at length came forth and called upon him to come to their families and help them."

The following account of his catechising is given by Mr. G.

"As for his method in going from house to house, for the instructing of private families, it was this:—He would give them notice of his

coming the day before, desiring that he might have admittance to their houses, to converse with them about their souls' concerns; and that they would have their whole family together when he came. When he did come, and the family were called together, he would be instructing the younger sort in the principles of religion, by asking several questions in the Catechism; the answers to which he would be opening and explaining to them. Also he would be inquiring of them about their spiritual state and condition, labouring to make them sensible of the evil and danger of sin, the corruption and wickedness of our natures, the misery of an unconverted state; stirring them up to look after the true remedy proposed in the gospel, to turn from all their sins unto God, to close with Christ upon his own terms; to follow after holiness, to watch over their hearts and lives, to mortify their lusts, to redeem their time, to prepare for eternity. And before he did go from any family, he would deal with the heads of that family, and such others as were grown to years of discretion, singly and apart, that so he might, as much as possibly he could, come to know the condition of each particular person in his flock, and address himself in his discourse as might be suitable to every one of them.

" He used to spend five afternoons every week in such exercises, from one or two o'clock, until

seven in the evening. In which space of time he would visit sometimes three or four families in an afternoon, and sometimes more, according as they were greater or less. He did often bless God for the great success that he had in these exercises, saying, that God had made him as instrumental of good to souls this way, as by his public preaching, if not more. When the ministers of this county of Somerset, at one of their Associations, which heretofore they held, were debating whether, and how far it were incumbent upon them to set up private family instruction in their particular charges, Mr. Alleine was the man that they pitched upon to draw up his reasons for that practice, together with a method for the more profitable managing of it."

From the abridgment of what he drew up on that occasion I make the following extracts:—

"If we know any evil of any of our flock, we may take them aside privately, showing them the sinfulness of their practice, and engaging them to promise reformation.

"We should leave with them some few particulars of greatest weight, often repeating them, till they remember them; engaging them to mind them till we shall converse with them again.

"Our dealing with them must be in that manner that may most prevail and win upon their hearts.

" 1. With compassion; being kindly affectioned to them, charging, exhorting, comforting every one of them, as a father his children.

" 2. With prudence; warning and teaching them in all wisdom, applying ourselves to their several cases and capacities.

" 3. With patience; being gentle to all men; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; bearing with their dulness, rudeness, and disrespectfulness; waiting for their repentance.

" 4. With all faithfulness, giving no occasion of offence, that our ministry be not blamed.

" 5. With zeal, as Apollos, fervent in spirit, teaching diligently the things of the Lord, &c.

" 6. With plainness, not betraying their souls to hell, and ours with them, for want of faithfulness and closeness in our dealing with them. It being not sufficient in general, that no drunkard, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; but telling them plainly, and particularly, 'Such is your looseness, your ignorance, that I fear you are in an unconverted state.'

" 7. With authority; dealing with them in the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

" 8. With humility; 'not lording it over God's heritage, but condescending to men of low estates;' nor disdaining to go into the houses of the meanest."

" There is one thing more, in which his self-denial and other graces were very exemplary; namely, his faithfulness in reproving the miscarriages of professors, sparing none, whether high or low, whether ministers or private Christians; yea, although they had been never so dear in his affections, and never so obliging in their carriage to him, yet if he found in them any thing that was reprovable, and blame-worthy, he would deal with them faithfully and plainly about it, whatsoever the issue and event were.

" One time when he was going about such a work, he told a Christian friend, with whom he was very intimate and familiar, ' Well,' says he, ' I am going about that which is like to make a very dear and obliging friend to become an enemy. But, however, it cannot be omitted; it is better to lose man's favour than God's.' But God was pleased then, as well as many other times besides, when he went about business of this nature, to order things for him better than he could have expected, and so to dispose of the heart of the person with whom he had to deal, that he was so far from becoming his enemy for his conscientious faithfulness to him, that he loved him the better ever after, as long as he lived.

" He was a man of a very calm and peaceable spirit, one that loathed all tumultuous carriages and proceedings; he was far from having any

other design in his preaching than the advancement of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, by the conversion and salvation of souls. This was the mark that he had in his eye; this was that for which he laboured, and ventured, and suffered, and for which he thought he could never lay out himself enough.

" Though he were but a young man, yet in his carriage he was exceeding serious and grave, and withal very humble, courteous, and affable, condescending to discourse with the poorest and meanest persons, for their spiritual good, as soon as with the greatest and richest.

" He was full of holy projects, often bethinking himself by what ways and means he might more effectually promote the honour of Christ, and the benefit of souls; and whatsoever he apprehended to be conducing to these highest ends, he would prosecute with that wisdom and vigour, that he seldom failed of bringing it to a comfortable and successful issue.

" Of which projects, this is one which I shall here insert. Having considered how much the conscientious and frequent performance of the duty of self-examination might tend to the bringing down of sin and furtherance of holiness, both in heart and life, he did earnestly press the said duty on his hearers in his preaching, directing them in the performance; and not only so, but dealt with them also in private about it, and got

a promise from the most of them, that they would every night, before they did take their rest, set about this duty; and spend some time in secret, on purpose to call themselves to an account how they had carried it that day, by proposing several questions to their own hearts, which questions he had referred to several heads, and drawn up for them in writing.

"And not a few of them have acknowledged that they have cause to bless God, who stirred him up to put them upon this practice, which they have found very helpful to them in their daily Christian walk."

The following extracts are from

USEFUL QUESTIONS, WHEREBY A CHRISTIAN MAY EVERY DAY EXAMINE HIMSELF.

"Have not I prayed to no purpose, or suffered wandering thoughts to eat out my duties? Matt. xviii. 8, 9. Jer. xii. 2.

"Have not I neglected, or been very overly in the reading God's holy word? Deut. xvii. 19. Josh. i. 7, 8.

"Was there not more of custom and fashion in my family duties than of conscience? Psalm ci. 2. Jer. xxx. 22.

"Wherein have I denied myself this day for God? Luke ix. 23.

" Have I been much in holy ejaculation? Neh. ii. 4, 5.

" Hath not God been out of mind, heaven out of sight? Psalm xvi. 8. Jer. ii. 32. Phil. iii. 23.

" Have I been often looking into my own heart, and made conscience of vain thoughts? Prov. iii. 23. Psalm cxix. 113.

" Have I come into no company where I have not dropped something of God, and left some good savour behind? Col. iv. 6. Ephes. iv. 29."

" He was frequent in keeping solemn days of humiliation, especially before a sacrament.

" He was a very strict observer of the sabbath, the duties of which he did perform with such joy and alacrity of spirit, as was most pleasant to join with him, both in public and in the family, when we could enjoy him. And this he did much press upon Christians, to spend their sabbaths more in praises and thanksgivings, as days of holy rejoicing in our Redeemer.

" All the time of his health he did rise constantly at or before four o'clock, and on the sabbath sooner if he did wake. He would be much troubled if he heard any smiths, or shoemakers, or such tradesmen, at work at their trades, before he was in his duties with God; saying to me often, 'O how this noise shames me! Does not *my* master deserve more than *theirs?*' From four till eight he spent in prayer, holy contemplation,

and singing of psalms, which he much delighted in, and did daily practise alone as well as in his family. Having refreshed himself about half an hour, he would call to family duties, and after that to his studies, till eleven or twelve o'clock, cutting out his work for every hour in the day. Having refreshed himself a while after dinner, he used to retire to his study to prayer, and so abroad among the families he was to visit, to whom he always sent the day before; going out about two o'clock, and seldom returning till seven in the evening, sometimes later. He would often say, 'Give me a Christian that counts his time more precious than gold.'

"Those that sent slight excuses, [declining his pastoral visits,] or did obstinately refuse his message, he would notwithstanding go to them, and if, as some would, they did shut their doors against him, he would speak some few affectionate words to them; or if he saw cause, denounce the threatenings of God against them that despise his ministers, and so departed; and after would send affectionate letters to them, so full of love and expressions of his great desire to do their souls good, as did overcome their hearts; and they did many of them afterwards readily receive him into their houses."

DR. WITHERSPOON.

The name of Dr. John Witherspoon is well known both in this country and on the other side of the Atlantic. After having successively occupied two charges in Scotland, he went to America at the early part of the revolution, and was for many years before he died President of Princetown College, New Jersey, where he contributed not a little to raise the standard of American literature and of the ministerial character among the students placed under his care. The following extracts are taken from a very valuable sermon, entitled "Ministerial Fidelity in declaring the whole Counsel of God." The text is Acts xx. 26, 27. "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I have not failed to declare to you the whole counsel of God." This was the last discourse he addressed to his flock at Paisley, before he left them for America. This will help to explain the reason of

his introducing the last branch of his subject in the way in which it is here expressed. I propose, says he,

" I. To consider the fidelity of a minister, as consisting in *a full and complete* declaration of the counsel of God.

" II. To consider the difficulties which may lie in his way, or tempt him to *shun* any part of his work.

" III. To make a particular improvement of the subject, by giving you my parting advices, in the spirit of this passage, and in a way, to the best of my judgment, suited to your situation.

" First, then, Let us consider the fidelity of a minister, as consisting in *a full and complete* declaration of the counsel of God. This is a circumstance which the apostle seems to have laid particular stress upon, in his discourse to the elders of Ephesus, as he not only rests his solemn appeal to themselves, in this passage, upon it, but had mentioned it before, verses 20, 21. ' And how I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is, indeed, a circumstance of the utmost moment, as ministers may be supposed much more ready to fall short in this respect than in any other. It is probable that many more are

chargeable with concealing truth than affirming falsehood; with neglecting duty than committing crimes; with not building the house than wilfully pulling it down. Agreeably to this, we find the charge of the prophet against unfaithful shepherds is chiefly or only for neglect of duty. Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 4. 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.' But that you may have as comprehensive a view as possible of the character of a faithful minister given in the text, observe, that integrity, in declaring all the counsel of God, implies the following particulars:—

"1. Declaring all the truths of God, without any exceptions. The revealed will of God is of great extent and compass. It takes in all that we are to believe concerning God, and all the duty which God requires of man.

"There is a preciousness in every truth that hath the stamp of divine authority upon it; and, therefore, to neglect any of them, and count them trifling, or of little moment, argues a want of reverence for the word of God. The holy scriptures, as they are full and complete, containing every thing that is necessary; so they are perfect and faultless, containing nothing that is unnecessary. Serious persons have often borne testimony to the great utility of such parts of the sacred oracles as are commonly treated with most indifference. Nay, I cannot help thinking, that the veneration due to God, who doth nothing in vain, obliges us to believe the utility even of those passages whose purpose we ourselves may not as yet have clearly perceived.

"They are therefore greatly to be blamed who are at no pains to make known the counsel of God in its full extent; but how much more those who satisfy themselves with insisting upon some things, which may be most agreeable to their own taste and disposition, to the entire neglect of others that are perhaps of equal or of greater moment! We see this happen too frequently, that things which fill almost every page in the holy scriptures can scarce obtain a place in many sermons. We see some industriously avoid the truths of the everlasting gospel, and others the duties of the moral law.

" But, of all others, the most wonderful set of men are those, who are for concealing some of the truths of God, lest they should be abused. The sovereignty of God, his eternal purpose, and the freeness of his grace, are often passed by under this ridiculous pretence. I would despise the wisdom of such persons; it is arrogance—it is impiety. I do not know any truth that cannot be abused by perverse and corrupt minds, or that has not, in many instances, been abused. But is this a reason for concealing them? No. I would preach them openly; I would preach them fully; I would endeavour to guard them against the abuse; and let sinners know, that if they wrest the good word of God, they do it to their own destruction.

" 2. Integrity in declaring *all the counsel of God,* implies preaching the truths of the gospel in their full and just proportion. Under the former particular I have shown the necessity of doing justice to every truth; let us now add the duty of giving their full room and place to important and fundamental truths. In order to make a just portrait of a human body, it is necessary, not only to have all the parts, but to have every one in the true proportion it bears to another.

" If we look into the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, we shall find certain leading truths, which are of so great moment, that they ought hardly ever to be out of view; such as the

lost state of man by nature; the absolute necessity of salvation through Christ; the suffering of the Saviour in the sinner's room; and free forgiveness through the blood of the atonement; the necessity of regeneration; and the gift of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort his people. These truths are of such unspeakable moment in divine revelation, that they ought to be clearly explained, strongly inculcated, and frequently repeated; they are the doctrines of the reformation; they make the substance of all the Protestant confessions; they are the glory of the Protestant churches; and have been sealed by the blood of thousands of suffering martyrs.

" I do not think the apostle Paul was defective, in giving particular instructions upon every subject, to those churches which he either planted or watered; yet he says to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ii. 2, ' For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;' intimating that such was his attachment to that great truth, that it would occupy, in a manner, the whole of his time and labour; or rather, that it had such an intimate connexion with every other part of the will of God, that, be the subject what it would, this could hardly be entirely out of view.

" He, who would declare the whole *counsel of God*, must still place these great and operative doctrines in a conspicuous point of view; he

must not pass them over slightly; he must not even speak of them coldly, but in such a manner as to show that he knows their truth and feels their moment. What an inconsistency for a Christian minister, to speak of the Lord Redeemer in such a style, as naturally leads the hearers to put him upon a level with Socrates or Plato, or other uninspired teachers, who never pretended to be saviours! What poison to the souls of men, for any to speak as if they were speaking to Adam before the fall, and to sing those sinners asleep in security, whom they should endeavour to alarm, that they may be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come! What betraying of their trust, to entertain their people with an affected display of their own talents or idle speculations—to amuse the fancy when they should be building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation!

"3. That to *declare all the counsel of God*, is to preach all the truths of God in their proper order and connexion. To allude to the similitude formerly used of making a portrait of a human body, every member must not only be in its just proportion, but in its proper place. In teaching every science there is a certain order that must be observed, otherwise the labour will be in a great measure lost; but it holds in nothing more strongly than in teaching religion, and opening the truths of the gospel. I might confirm this

by many examples, or rather, indeed, by going through the whole system of divine truth, but shall only make a remark or two for illustrating the observation. The necessity of salvation by Christ is founded upon the lost state of man by nature. Unless the one is first established, the beauty and meaning of the other will wholly disappear; unless we are now in a corrupt and guilty state; unless man has indeed lost the knowledge of the true God, the kindness of God to his peculiar people—the promises in the prophetic writings of light to the Gentiles—and the riches of divine grace in the gospel, spoken of in such magnificent terms, must all appear inconsiderable, and unworthy of regard. Unless you can convince men of their sins, and make them sensible of the holiness and justice of God, in vain will you preach the gospel to them; in vain will you call it 'glad tidings of great joy to all people;' they do not understand the terms, they will deride the message, and spurn the offered mercy.

"If you preach the free forgiveness of sin through Christ, without, at the same time, showing the necessity of regeneration and sanctification by his spirit, it will either not be embraced at all, or it will be turned into licentiousness. And if you preach the duties of the law, without, at the same time, displaying the grace of the gospel, and the vital influence that flows from the head to the members, you will either build up

men in a destructive system of pharisaical religion and self-righteousness, or bring them under the Egyptian bondage of making brick though they are not furnished with straw. The privileges and duties of the gospel stand in an unseparable connexion; if you take away the first, you starve and mortify the last. Hear what our Lord himself says, John xv. 4, 5. 'Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.' I say the same thing of not enforcing the duties of the gospel with the great and powerful motives drawn from its truths. You see in what a convincing and affecting manner the apostle Paul speaks of his own conduct, and that of the other apostles, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' It is doubtless lawful, nay, it is for the glory of God, to make occasional mention of every argument against sin, drawn from nature, reason, and experience, to show that 'the law is holy, the commandment holy, just, and good.' But let us not hope to make conscientious, active, fruit-

ful Christians any other way than by teaching them to live 'the life that they live in the flesh, a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them.'

"All who know the grace of God in truth, will desire to have this connexion between one truth and another, and the influence of truth on duty inviolably preserved. It is, indeed, common with some to allege, that the friends of the gospel, those who are attached to the doctrine of redemption, are enemies to the law, and that they do not love to hear their duty preached to them. I look upon this as an unjust and detestable slander, and commonly spread by those who know nothing of the subserviency of the law to the gospel, or rather who understand very little either of the one or the other.

"Again, if a minister preach the duties of the gospel, explain them in all their extent, and press them by arguments drawn from the New Testament, as the fruits of faith, as the evidences of their change, as a debt of gratitude to their Redeemer, as the marks of their relation to him, and necessary to fit them for his presence, I believe it will not be unacceptable to any of his people. On the contrary, they do usually both approve and delight in these sermons which are most searching to the conscience, and most clear and explicit in the trial of their state. Titus iii. 8. 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou

affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.' It is our duty to show not only that professing Christians ought to be holy, but that they must be holy; and that if they live and die the slaves of any known sin, Christ, and all that he hath done, shall profit them nothing, but only aggravate their condemnation.

"4. Fidelity in declaring the whole *counsel of God*, implies preaching every truth in its proper season. 'There is,' as Solomon tells us, 'a time for every thing under the sun;' and, where the truths of the gospel are taught in their season, it gives them a particular lustre as well as an uncommon force. That you may understand what I mean by preaching the truths of religion in their season, you may observe, that besides giving with assiduity and care the necessary instructions for every particular duty incumbent on persons, families, or congregations, the season may vary, and the propriety and necessity of insisting upon some truths, may arise from two circumstances; —the state of religion among a people—and the aspect of providence towards them.

"1*st*, It may arise from the state of religion among a people. Surely it is the duty of a minister to suit his instructions to the present and most pressing necessities of his hearers; not to foster their prejudices, but, with care and

judgment, to correct them; not to pardon or overlook their prevailing errors, but to rectify them; not to bear with epidemic sins, but, with boldness and severity to reprove them. It will be seen, on the following head, that some of the greatest difficulties that lie in the way of ministers, and the strongest temptations to unfaithfulness, come from this quarter. What an admirable example have we of propriety and fidelity in the apostle Paul's discourse to Felix, the Roman governor, when he desired to hear him concerning the faith of Christ! We are told, Acts xxiv. 25, that he took occasion to 'reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.' In speaking to one who had probably no other intention in desiring to hear him than to gratify his curiosity, by obtaining a distinct account of the wonderful history of Christ, he thought proper to apply to all those principles of natural conscience which might be supposed yet to retain some power over him. And if, as many judicious interpreters think, instead of temperance we should read continence, it was a bold and severe yet well-timed reproof to him and Drusilla, who were then living in adultery.

"It is the duty of a minister to suit himself to the state of religion among his people, by withholding nothing that is profitable, but particularly insisting on what is most needful. If any of the truths of the gospel are in danger of being

neglected, if they are undermined by secret, or assaulted by open enemies, it is the duty of a minister to make frequent mention of them, lest they should be forgotten; and to support and confirm them, that they may obtain acceptance. If any duty is in danger of falling into disesteem, and a false shame makes many decline the practice, a faithful minister should stand forth an open and zealous advocate for its continuance. If any particular sin, or sins, prevail remarkably in a place, and appear to be gaining ground, it is the duty of a minister to beware of yielding to the stream, or seeking his own quiet by silence; on the contrary, he ought to double his diligence, and make the most resolute and vigorous opposition to the incroaching evil.

" 2*dly*, The proper season of insisting on particular truths may arise from the aspect of providence towards the church in general, or a congregation, family, or person, in particular. You see the apostles constantly make use of the state of the church in their time—the number and violence of its enemies, to excite the servants of Christ to vigilance, to exhort them to constancy, and to exercise them to patience. In times of public danger too the self-seeking minister throws off the mask, and deserts the cause, while the faithful who remain are necessarily animated with uncommon zeal.

" But a different aspect of providence calls also for instruction in season. In times of public quiet and security, there is the greatest reason to dread, and, by consequence, to guard against indifference and formality in religion, on the one hand, or unnecessary contention about it on the other. When the profession of the gospel is at any rate safe, and in some degree profitable, the church is always incumbered with a dead weight of customary Christians, who receive their religion from their fathers, and continue to tread, as it were, in the beaten path. It is no easy matter to shake their security when every outward circumstance conspires to increase it. And as the spiritual slumber takes hold, in some measure, even of those who are alive unto God, it is no trifling task to exercise discipline, at once with prudence and with firmness, and to preserve the life and power of religion, when every thing is stiffening into form.

" But the course of providence toward the church in general is not only to be observed and improved, but whatever is remarkable or singular in particular congregations.

" To these observations I only add, that in the whole course of private parochial duties, a faithful minister will speak the truths of God in their proper season. If in family visitation, or private and personal admonition, he hath not a particular

view either to their character, as far as it is known, or their state in providence, however excellent or important his instructions may be in other respects, he declareth not the whole counsel of God. But if he is truly actuated by a desire of being useful, and keeps this circumstance in his eye, with what readiness will he communicate instruction to the ignorant, consolation to the distressed, and reproof to the obstinate!

"5. In the last place, *declaring the whole counsel of God*, implies preaching the truths of the gospel honestly and boldly, without respect of persons. I am persuaded the apostle Paul, who was himself so remarkable for an undaunted courage in his Master's cause, had this, amongst other things, in view, when he says he had not *shunned* to declare the counsel of God. There are few temptations more dangerous to a minister than the fear of man.

"The trials of the apostles were indeed in this respect uncommonly severe; but even setting aside the case of open persecution, there is great reason for ministers to guard against that fear of man which bringeth a snare. As their hearers are of all different ranks and degrees, they ought, with the utmost impartiality, to preach the duties incumbent upon, and reprove the sins that cleave to men of every station. As they speak in the name of God, and carry a message from the King of kings, they ought to do it with the dignity that

becomes an ambassador from him. They ought not to be dismayed at the presence of the most high and mighty of their fellow sinners, when they remember the continual presence of him before whom 'mean men are vanity, and great men are a lie.'

"II. I proceed now to the second thing proposed, which was to consider the difficulties which may lie in a minister's way, and tempt him to *shun* any part of his work. These are very various, and not easy either to enumerate or describe. What hath generally made the greatest impression upon me, either from experience or observation, I shall dwell upon a little. It may be reduced to the three following heads:—sloth or worldliness in ourselves,—the prejudices of our people,—and the opposition of our enemies.

"1. Sloth or worldliness in ministers themselves may tempt them to shun some part of their work. You will see, from the preceding observations, that the work of a minister is both extensive and difficult. It requires the greatest intention of mind—the application, so to speak, of the whole man. It requires judgment to lay down the plan, diligence and perseverance to carry it into execution. Now slothfulness, and a love of ease or pleasure, to which we have all too great a bias, must be a very dangerous temptation; to evade some part of the duty, or slur it over in a slight or careless manner. We have all reason to be

ashamed that the important objects we have in view, and the interesting subjects we have to treat of, do not put an edge upon our spirits, and deliver us from that lazy unconcerned manner, which is equally dishonourable to God and hurtful to the souls of men. I take the liberty to observe, that slothfulness is very incident to persons of considerable abilities; instead of being excited to improve their talents, they are inclined to trust to them. Finding, by experience, that they can do tolerably with but little pains, they soon come to content themselves with next to none.

" I joined worldliness with sloth, because they are near of kin, and commonly co-operate one with another. Too many worldly cares, or too much indulgence of worldly pleasure, must be a very dangerous temptation to those who are entrusted with the care of souls.

" 2. Another very great difficulty, which often lies in the way of a minister, arises from the prejudices of his people. It would be idle to suppose that ever we shall find a people, among whom there are no mistaken notions, or unjust prepossessions, which it is our duty, with prudence, but at the same time with honesty, to withstand. As no congregation can expect to meet with a perfect minister, so no minister should expect to meet with a faultless congregation.

" When any sin is common and prevalent in a place, when it has long kept possession, and has

been generally overlooked; if a minister sees it his duty to reprove it with severity, and especially if he will not tolerate it without censure, he may expect no little difficulty and opposition. There are many who will complain of him as too rigid, and impute to ill-nature and indiscretion what arises from the dictates of conscience and a sense of duty. By bearing open testimony against the introduction of fashionable amusements, or conformity to the world, he will often incur not only the hatred of the profligate, but the disapprobation of those prudent compliers, who are at once ashamed to approve, and unwilling to oppose any sinful relaxation.

"But what I had chiefly in view, was to mention these prejudices that may prevail with regard to religion, and which may be of such a nature, as a minister may be under a necessity not only of refusing to comply with, but of opposing in the most direct and positive manner. If any error or mistake of consequence prevail either among his people in general, or any part of them, either among the high or the low, the learned or the vulgar, he must endeavour to destroy it.

"3. The last difficulty which I shall mention, as lying in the way of ministers, is the opposition of their enemies. No faithful minister can expect to be without enemies. In a private character, and retired way of life, a man may, by very great prudence, and particularly by silence

and forbearance, in a great measure, escape the resentment or injuries of violent men. And to be as little embroiled with others as possible, is both our interest and our duty. 'If it be possible,' says the apostle, 'and as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.' But it is certain, from long and invariable experience, that there is such enmity and rancour in the hearts of wicked men against all who are in good earnest about religion, that they may lay their account with continual opposition, and continual slander.

"But if wicked men are injurious to the children of God in general, their malice must be particularly whetted against a minister, so far as he does his duty. He is placed in a public station, and is obliged to be active in his Master's cause. Time-serving or neutrality, as to the interest of religion, is commendable in none, but it is unpardonable in him. He must bear testimony openly and resolutely against vice and wickedness. And reproof, when administered with severity, is certain of making either a friend or an enemy. A faithful minister will not suffer Satan's kingdom to be at peace; and, therefore, it is no wonder that when they are gnawing their tongues with pain, they should pour out their venom against him who gives them so much disturbance.

"There are many ways by which the enmity and opposition of wicked men to the truth may prove a temptation to a minister: a few of which

I shall mention, as I hope the distinct knowledge of them may be profitable to you in the way of caution: 1*st*, as one of their chief weapons is contempt and derision, he may be in danger of concealing or perverting truth, in some degree, in order to avoid it. When the gospel of Christ was first published, the doctrine of the cross, we are told, was 'to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.' The same truth, in its simplicity, is still treated with scorn by profane and worldly men. All that relates to it is considered as weakness and absurdity; and the minister who insists upon it, must lose his character with many for capacity and judgment. Is not this known to be true in daily experience? Are not such immediately stigmatized as weak and babbling creatures? Now, it is not altogether an easy sacrifice for a minister to be indifferent as to the opinion formed of his parts and sufficiency, to wait till time shall do him justice, or to be altogether unconcerned whether it ever do him justice or not. It is no trifling thing to become *a fool* in the eye of the world *for Christ's sake*, and *not to be ashamed of his cross.* I know not, indeed, a more difficult thing, nor do I know any thing more noble in a minister, than to 'cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,' to be truly superior to the applause or censure of either one class or another of his hearers, and therefore to avoid a vain display of human art; but, at the

same time, from a sense of duty to God and veneration for his truths, to be at all due pains to treat them properly, so as they may appear with light and evidence to the understanding, and come home with force upon the conscience. Such a man will bring forth the doctrines of the gospel in their own unadorned majesty and native simplicity; he will not consider himself as preaching *before* his hearers as critics; for what are they to him in this view? but he will consider himself as preaching *to* them as sinners, and pleading with them as immortal creatures, tottering upon the very brink of eternal perdition.

"2*dly*, The opposition of enemies may tempt men of little courage to sinful silence for their own quiet. When vice is prevalent, it is also commonly insolent and resentful. Now, the hatred or ill-will of no person is desirable, and there are a thousand ways in which any person of a revengeful spirit may be hurtful. There are also very few so unconnected but that they have many friends, whose hatred is to be encountered as well as their own. The influence of this is but too much seen in every place. Offenders are often screened from reproof or censure, through fear of provoking them or their relations. Neither is it at all difficult to find palliating arguments, drawn from prudence, or other considerations, to make us think it is necessary to forbear.

"3*dly*, Ministers of weak minds may be apt to sink under the opposition of the wicked. It is said of Lot, dwelling in Sodom, that he was, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, 'Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' It certainly needs no small measure of fortitude and holy resolution, to persist in the discharge of our duty, notwithstanding the obstinacy of sinners, and to seek our comfort, under continual obloquy, from the approbation of him that judgeth righteously.

"4*thly*, The opposition of wicked men may prove a temptation, as it may bring forth the remains of corruption that are in the hearts of good men, and make them sin, by imprudence or passion, if not by resentment. I have nowhere supposed that ministers are faultless in their conduct; they may, no doubt, err considerably in many circumstances, even when their intention upon the whole is just and laudable."

The following paragraph occurs in the third part of the discourse—the practical improvement of the subject. Though it chiefly refers to the people's conduct, in reference to their minister, yet there is a valuable hint to ministers in the conclusion. But the paragraph is so replete with good sense, that I quote the whole of it.

" Desire a faithful minister, do your utmost to obtain him, and then let it be your habitual study to profit by him. You have reason to be very thankful that your situation, in providence, is such as you may expect a minister who is a hearty friend to the gospel, and, at the same time, one who is agreeable to your own choice. Let me exhort you, as far as you are consulted in that matter, to make the choice with much calmness and prudence; to look for one, not only sound in his principles, but of thorough knowledge and capacity, always preferring solid before specious parts. After having made the choice, endeavour to strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart, in the Lord, by a careful attendance on his ministry, and by a dutiful submission to instruction and reproof. You ought not to wish for one who will flatter you, nor ought you to lay such a temptation in a minister's way, as to show that you are pleased with being flattered. The best testimony that you can give to a minister is, to learn from him, and to obey him. This is infinitely better than noisy praise and admiration, according to the excellent remark of Bishop Burnet, 'That it is not the best sermon that makes the hearers go away talking to one another, and praising the speaker; but that which makes them go away thoughtful, and serious, and hastening to be alone.' Has a minister any evidently profane persons among his hearers? If he cannot preach

them from sin to God, it were much more for his credit to preach so as that they are not able to hear him, but flee away for ease to their conscience, than to have them continue in wickedness, and yet praise him every day for an admirable speaker or an able man."

DR. ERSKINE.

The name of Dr. Erskine is too well known, especially in the northern part of the island, to render any particular notice necessary in introducing the following extracts. He was unquestionably one of the brightest ornaments of the church of Scotland. Connected with one of the most respectable families in the country, he chose the profession of a minister of the gospel entirely from attachment to the sacred employment, and through a long life eminently adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour. In 1818 an account of Dr. Erskine's life, or rather a work which may be said to comprise an account of the ecclesiastical history of his time, was published by his intimate friend the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart. in which a considerable variety of interesting information is to be found. Speaking of his Sermons, his able biographer very justly remarks, "If the

simplicity of his style excludes the ornaments of an artificial structure, it is always clear, and never intricate. If his sentences are not anxiously or exactly measured, they are uniformly forcible, and never slovenly. He expresses himself always in the language of an acute and vigorous understanding, which never misses the point which it professes to have in view; and which is seldom deficient, either in the perspicuity of its argument, or in the variety of its illustration."

Dr. Erskine died in 1803, at the advanced age of eighty-two years. And as the volume of Sermons from which the following extracts are taken were published not many years before his death, they may be justly considered as containing the result of the matured observation and experience of their venerable author.

The first extracts are from a sermon entitled

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL CAUTIONED AGAINST GIVING OFFENCE.

The text is 2 Cor. vi. 3. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed."

"It is not enough that we are not chargeable with scandalous wickedness. If we indulge ourselves in practices of a suspicious nature; venture to the utmost bounds of what is lawful; needlessly frequent the company of scoffers at religion; or, at least, spend more of our leisure hours with the gay and thoughtless, than with sober serious

Christians; if our conduct betrays a crafty, political, intriguing spirit; if we discover no relish for retirement; are often and unnecessarily in the tavern, seldom in the closet, and reserve little of our time for reading, meditation, and prayer; if a word scarce ever drops from us in ordinary conversation that can either instruct or edify, we transgress the precept of giving no offence. With whatever force of argument, and seeming warmth, we recommend from the pulpit heavenly mindedness and devotion, humility, self-denial, weanedness from the world, uprightness and integrity, the careful improvement of time, and a tender circumspect life, few who observe our behaviour will be charitable, or rather, will be blind enough, to fancy us in earnest. The judicious will shrewdly suspect that pleasure, gain, or honour, is dearer to us than God's glory and the salvation of souls. Good men will be offended; and even bad men, whatever they pretend, will in their hearts despise us. We move in a more exalted sphere than others; and, if we would shine as lights of the world, had need to avoid every appearance of evil, and to consider well, not only what is just and pure, but what is lovely and of good report. Many things, abstractly considered, may be lawful, which yet are not expedient, and edify not. Duty, indeed, sometimes obliges us to contradict the humours of our people. But it is neither acting a wise nor a good part to con-

tradict them for contradiction's sake. In matters indifferent, we should become all things to all men, that we may gain the more; and deny ourselves the use of our lawful liberty, when, by indulging it, our brother would be stumbled, or offended, or made weak.

" He bids fairest to preach with success, who preaches in words, not of man's wisdom, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. The blessed Spirit sets his seal only to doctrines stamped with his own authority, and which flow from that sacred fountain unsullied and pure. The gospel, when mingled with human inventions, loses much of its native lustre, and, like adulterated milk, affords but scanty and unwholesome nourishment. An itch to say what is curious and uncommon, is a dangerous turn of mind in a teacher of Christianity. Common truths are like common blessings—of most use, and of truest worth: and that is the best sermon which makes the grace of God sweet, salvation through Christ acceptable, sin ugly and hateful, and holiness amiable to the soul.

" If they give just ground of offence who add to the word of God, they do it also who take from it. All God's words are right. There is nothing froward or perverse in them. Every doctrine and precept is wisely suited to promote God's glory and man's salvation, and was mercifully revealed for that very purpose. All scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Those entertain too high a conceit of their own penetration, and very mean ideas of the divine wisdom, who fancy it dangerous to preach what the blessed Spirit judged it proper to reveal. If we would keep back from our people nothing profitable, we must endeavour to declare to them the whole counsel of God. Concealing any part of that form of sound words which our commission directs us to publish, is unfaithfulness to God, and injustice to the souls of men. 'He,' saith God, 'that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.' Jer. xxiii. 28. And again, 'All the words that I command thee to speak unto them, diminish not a word.' Jer. xxvi. 2.

"As wise and faithful stewards, we must regard the whole family, and give to every one his proper portion: teaching the young and ignorant, in a plain familiar manner, the first principles of the oracles of God; and dispensing strong meat to them of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The erroneous we must endeavour by sound reasoning to convince of their mistakes. We must unfold the strictness, spirituality, and extent of God's law; and display the awful sanctions that enforce it, to rouse from their spiritual lethargy the secure and thoughtless, the bold and presumptuous, the proud and self-confident:

awakened souls we must gently allure to Christ, by the sweet and free invitations of the gospel; and believers we must exhort, by a faithful discharge of every duty, to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.

" Perhaps it is one chief occasion of our giving offence, by not declaring the whole counsel of God, that there are certain subjects peculiarly easy and agreeable to us, which, on that account, we are apt to imagine the most important, and to insist upon the most frequently. Lecturing usually on large portions of scripture might be some remedy to this evil. Occasions would in that way soon present, of explaining every doctrine, and inculcating every duty. Both we and our hearers would grow better acquainted with the lively oracles, and learn to read them more profitably. Besides, short occasional hints, which naturally arise in our ordinary course of expounding a gospel or epistle, may fall with weight on our hearers ere they are aware, and force conviction. Whereas, when the subject of a sermon is directly levelled against vulgar prejudices or fashionable vices, instantly the alarm is taken, and the mind strengthens itself against evidence. The heart is a fort more easily taken by sap than by storm.

" Ministers give offence when they preach not in a manner calculated to inform the judgment. Men are rational creatures, and if we would address them as such, the understanding should, as

the leading power, be first applied to. For this purpose, we must clearly open and explain the truth, confirm it by arguments level to the capacities of our hearers, and do all this in plain familiar language, which even those in low life may easily understand. Christianity was designed for the peasant as well as the philosopher, and as the learned and wise make a small proportion of most congregations, to preach it in a way in which only they are like to be the better for it, is highly offensive.

"Alas! my brethren, dull and pointless arrows are ill suited to pierce the conscience of hardened sinners. Soft and drowsy harangues, instead of rousing a secure generation, will rather increase their spiritual lethargy; and a cold preacher will soon have a cold auditory. Jesus has intrusted us with the concerns of his people, a people dearly bought, and greatly beloved; we have to do with souls that must be happy or miserable for ever; we address them in the name of God upon matters of infinite importance: and is it not an indignity to him, whose ambassadors we are, to execute our commission coolly, and as if half asleep? Will it not tempt others to slight our message, if, by the manner of delivering it, we appear to slight it ourselves? When our own hearts are most impressed with the inestimable worth of immortal souls; when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; when our

sentiments, style, voice, and gesture discover how much we are in earnest: then we are most likely to touch the hearts of our hearers, and make them feel the force of what we say.

"If we pay no regard to the souls of our charge, unless in the pulpit, and immediate preparation for it; if we seem indifferent how we stand in the esteem and affection of our people, or what is the success of our labours; if we use not every proper method for conveying and cherishing religious impressions, for preventing backslidings, and for recovering those that have fallen, from their spiritual decays; if we neglect to warn the unruly, to comfort them that mourn, to visit the afflicted, and to catechize the young and ignorant, when we have any probable prospect that these services may be useful; or if we manage our visits to the sick so incautiously, that bystanders are encouraged to put off thoughts of repentance to their last moments, and thereby sustain a hurt which any good done to the dying will seldom balance, we greatly fail of our duty, and are guilty of giving offence."

THE UNFAITHFUL AND FAITHFUL MINISTER CONTRASTED.

"Though his heavenly Master, who invested him with so honourable an office, is present and

observes his conduct, he dares to be indolent in his service, and basely to betray his interest. He scruples not the most direct and horrible perjury, by violating the solemn engagements he came under, to take heed to the flock of which he was ordained an overseer. He feels no remorse for offending the Sovereign of Zion, by a neglect of duty, and a breach of trust, which, in his own servant, or in the servant of an earthly sovereign, would have appeared to him infamous and detestable. But possibly, when death is about to seal the eyes of his body, the eyes of his soul may be opened to perceive things as they really are. After having spent his life in doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, and pursuing the honours, riches, and pleasures of this world, not the glory of God and the salvation of souls, methinks I see him receive the awful summons, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' He feels himself about to be dragged to a state of misery, eternal and intolerable. Conscience awakes from its fatal slumber, and by the most cruel and insupportable reproaches, avenges his contempt of its old and long-forgotten remonstrances. His wonted arts of stilling this inward tormentor now lose their power. Fearfulness and trembling come upon him, and horror overwhelms him. Hell is naked before him, and destruction without a covering. And God, justly provoked, laughs at his calamity, and

mocks when his fear cometh. Yet possibly another, equally unfaithful, may have no bonds in his death, and leave this world as he lived in it, thoughtless of God and duty, and regardless of eternity. But if dying does not, surely death shall, put an end to his peace. See him appearing before the tribunal of a now inexorable judge. Behold his countenance changed, his thoughts troubling him, the joints of his loins loosed, and his knees smiting one against another; when, lo! a voice more dreadful than thunder thus accosts him: 'Wicked and slothful servant, what hadst thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?' Mark a numerous flock ruined by his negligence or bad example. Listen to them calling for vengeance. The cry of their blood enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; and the irreversible doom is pronounced, 'Take him, bind him hand and foot, cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.'

"Turn away from this shocking scene, and observe on the right hand of the Son of man a faithful pastor. Possibly his dying words were words of triumph and transport: 'This is my rejoicing, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation

in the world. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.' But with what superior joy does he lift up his head, when he rests from his labours, when his warfare is accomplished, and the day of his complete redemption dawns! He walked with God in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. These he now presents to the great shepherd of the sheep, saying, 'Behold me, and the children thou hast given me.' He is their rejoicing, and they also are his rejoicing, in the day of the Lord Jesus. Joyful to both was the sound of the gospel: but more joyful now is the final sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

"If therefore we have any zeal for the glory of God; if any regard for the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom; if any tender concern for the salvation of our hearers; and if, in the great day of the Lord, we would not be found among them that offend and work iniquity, and after having prophesied in Christ's name, hear him pronounce against us the dreadful sentence, 'Depart from me, I know you not,' let us take heed to ourselves

and to our doctrine, and walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.

" Upon the whole, would we give no offence as men, as Christians, as ministers of Christ; let us search out the sins and infirmities to which we are chiefly liable, that we may guard against these with peculiar care. In order to discover our weak side, let us duly regard the opinion others entertain of us. Let us not interpret friendly admonition as a disparagement and affront, but thankfully receive it as a mark of unfeigned affection. Say, with David, ' Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be as excellent oil which shall not break my head.' We are often blind to our own failings; and happy are we, if we can engage some wise and good man, who tenderly regards our welfare, to point them out. But if we find none thus faithful and honest, let us wisely improve the accusations of enemies, and learn from them those blemishes and defects, to which, without the help of such ill-natured monitors, we might have remained strangers.

" With pure and upright intentions dedicate yourself to the service of God in the gospel of his Son. Take the oversight of the flock, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. To use the words of another on a like occasion, ' You had better be the off-

scouring of all flesh, than preach to gain the vain applause of your fellow-worms. You had better beg your bread, than enter upon the ministry as a trade to live by. However those may live who act from no higher principle, it will be dreadful dying for them, and more dreadful appearing before their judge.' Expect, therefore, your reward from God only. Resolve, in divine strength, at no time to use flattering words or a cloak of covetousness; neither of man to seek glory, but ever to speak and act, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth the heart.

" Be diligent and faithful in the actual discharge of your office. Take heed to the ministry thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The longest life quickly hastens to a period; your time for service swiftly flies away, and will soon be irrecoverably past and gone; work, therefore, the work of him that sent you while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work. Make full proof of thy ministry. Think not that performing one branch of duty will atone for neglecting another; but, in so far as time and strength permit, attend upon each in its proper season.

" Allot the greatest proportion of your time to those parts of your work, public or private, that are most essential and important. Preach the word, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering. Study your sermons well, and beware of offering to God and his people that which costs

you nothing. Endeavour to be thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances and dispositions of your hearers, their prejudices against religion, and the rocks on which their souls are in most hazard of being shipwrecked. Suit your discourses to their various necessities. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Seek out and set in order acceptable words; and when about to prepare for the pulpit, beg the direction of the Spirit in choosing a subject, his assistance in composing and delivering your sermon, and his blessing to render it effectual. Arrows thus fetched from heaven bid fairest to reach the cases of your hearers, and to pierce their hearts.

" Take heed to yourself as well as to your doctrine. Let your life testify that you believe what you preach. Be wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Fly youthful lusts: but be a pattern to believers, in words, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Win the affection of all by an obliging courteous behaviour; and by preserving a suitable dignity of character secure their esteem. An affable condescending manner has often recommended a bad cause; and sourness and ill-nature have raised unconquerable prejudices against many a good one. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The

servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.—But though meekness should temper your zeal, remember that zeal in return should enliven your meekness. You enter on the ministry in a day in which iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. The peculiar doctrines of Christianity are run down and opposed, and a tender circumspect behaviour ridiculed, by many who value themselves as standards of genius or politeness. In such a day, exert your courage to stem that torrent of infidelity and vice, which threatens to break in upon us and destroy every thing valuable. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Be not ashamed of Christ's words and ways in an adulterous and perverse generation, lest the Son of man be ashamed of you, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

"He who wishes to be faithful and successful in the work of the ministry studies and delivers sermons on the unsatisfying nature and uncertain continuance of worldly enjoyments; on the value of time, and on the awfulness of death, judgment, and eternity. The truths suggested on these, and other important subjects, deeply impress his heart. While watering others he himself also is watered. When he visits the chambers of the dying, the

triumphs of the believer, and sometimes the terrors, though perhaps more frequently the stupidity, of the impenitent, awaken his tenderest feelings. By the joyful, or by the sorrowful countenances he beholds, his heart is made better. Painful experience of the imperfections and blemishes of his own character, and observation of the general depravity of mankind, and of the follies, weaknesses, and transgressions, from which even the best are not free, stimulate him to the prayer of faith for a larger measure of the influences of the blessed Spirit. His prayers are accepted on God's altar: and if the contradiction and opposition of men, who go on frowardly in the way of their own hearts, often try, they often also improve his meekness, forgiveness, and Christian compassion.

"Till your blessed Master call you from your services give attendance to reading as well as to exhortation and doctrine. Meditate on divine things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Cultivate and improve your talents, in as far as duties higher and more immediately necessary allow. Keep in remembrance every branch of knowledge which may promote your usefulness as a public teacher. Despise not materials for instruction, from the volumes of nature and of providence, the knowledge of the world, and acquaintance with your own heart. But let the sacred oracles be your chief study. Enter as far as possible into their

meaning, design, and spirit, that, as a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, you may bring out of your treasures things new and old.

" Let the subjects of your sermons be important, suited to the occasions on which you preach, and calculated, according to the opinions, characters, and situations of your hearers, to remove their prejudices, correct their errors, and rectify what is wrong in their temper and conduct.— When you have chosen a text, ascertain the meaning of it from the scope of the inspired writer, and the sense in which he generally uses particular expressions. It argues either poverty of genius, or culpable inattention, when preachers wander from the particular subject of their text to some common-place dissertation, which would equally suit a hundred other passages of scripture, if discoursed in that manner.

" Pay peculiar attention to the lambs of the flock. Sow the seed of knowledge when the soil is comparatively soft, and there are fewer thorns to check its growth. Your labour will be less pleasant, and probably less successful, when an enemy hath sown tares, or when, for want of culture, the field is overgrown with weeds.

" Form connexions with the wise, the benevolent, the pious. Yet call no man master, and depend on no human authority. Often lift up your eyes to your heavenly Father, to fill you with treasures of knowledge and of grace, to direct and

assist you in your studies and labours, and to crown them with success.

" Let earnest prayers for the down-pouring of the Spirit on your hearers precede and follow your sermons. If the rain of divine influence is restrained, though you could preach with the zeal of a Paul, or the eloquence of an Apollos, none of the wicked would understand, and return, and live.

" Preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke; exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. Administer reproof with tenderness, delicacy, and meekness, yet, when necessary to give it force, with plain and undisguised freedom. Remember, however, that there are times and places when wisdom forbids your rebuking a hard-hearted scorner, lest, when you give that which is holy to dogs, and cast your pearls before swine, they trample them under foot and return and rent you. Though your dispositions, talents, and ministerial services have found favourable acceptance with those whose sentiments you justly value, be not high-minded. Often reflect that you have nothing which you have not received; and that it is a little thing to be judged of man's judgment. Never lose sight of those imperfections and defects which, though others cannot, you can discern in yourself; and pray, with a great prophet and prince, 'Enter

not into judgment with thy servant: what I know not teach thou me.'"

The title of the discourse from which the following extracts are taken is

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

It is founded on 2 Cor. ii. 10. "Who is sufficient for these things?"

"Christ crucified, and salvation through him; the law, as a schoolmaster, to bring men to Christ; and exhorting the disciples of Jesus to adorn his doctrine, by the conscientious performance of every duty, ought to be the chief subjects of our sermons. A comprehensive knowledge of Christian faith and practice, and an ability to read and understand the scriptures in the languages in which they were originally writ, are highly important, if we would be ready scribes, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and, like unto a man that is a householder, able to bring out of our treasures things new and old. Inspiration and miraculous gifts are now ceased; and therefore much time must be spent in reading and meditation, in order to attain such knowledge. And yet our utmost diligence and application poorly qualify us for rightly expounding the sacred oracles, unless, through divine teachings, we imbibe the sentiments and spirit of their inspired pen-

men. Nay, an union of speculative and experimental knowledge, though necessary, is not sufficient to qualify for preaching usefully. Knowledge is one thing, and a faculty of imparting it to others, and of improving it for their benefit, is quite another.

" Great skill is requisite to explain the sublime mysteries of our holy faith, to unfold their mutual connexions and dependencies, and so to demonstrate their certainty, that the sincere lover of truth may be convinced, and even the captious silenced. Great penetration is requisite to search the secret foldings of the understanding and heart; to trace the various sources of error and vice; and when we have detected them, neither, by overlooking the reasonings of infidels and profligates, to give them a handle for boasting that they are unanswerable; nor, by mentioning them without necessity, or weakly answering them, to betray the cause we mean to defend.

" Add to all this, that the genius, spiritual condition, and outward circumstances of our hearers are various; and a manner of address proper for some would be very improper for others. The secure must be alarmed, the ignorant enlightened, the wounded in spirit led to the Physician of souls, the tempted fortified against temptation, the doubting resolved, the weak strengthened, the backslider reclaimed, and the mourner in Zion comforted. Even those truths which are the

common nourishment of all must be differently dressed and seasoned. Ministers are debtors to the wise and to the unwise, to the young and to the old, to the bond and to the free. But how difficult is it to discharge that debt, and, as wise and faithful stewards, to distribute to every one his portion of food in due season! Little pains may serve to display criticism and literature on subjects which do not need them, or without occasion to plunge so deep in abstract philosophical speculations, that the bulk of an audience shall lose sight of us. But it is incomparably more difficult to compose a popular discourse in a style plain, elegant, nervous, grave, and animated; neither bombast nor groveling; neither scrupulously exact nor sordidly negligent. Humble prayers and much preparation is necessary for that edifying strain of preaching, where the sentiments natively flow from the subject, and are all solid, useful, and calculated to strike; where every head, and every thing said by way of enlargement, is ranged in its proper order; and where the turn of thought and expression is scriptural and devout, natural and unaffected, sweet and insinuating, tender and affectionate.

"It is one important branch of our work to instruct and catechise the young and ignorant in the first principles of religion, seeing, without this knowledge, the heart cannot be good. If childhood and youth are left to their natural ignorance

and vanity, manhood and old age will be generally unprofitable; and sermons, however excellent, will prove of little service, because they cannot be understood without the previous knowledge of these first principles of religion. Christ has therefore solemnly enjoined us to feed his lambs. We are bound to nourish up children in the words of faith, and of sound doctrine; and experience shows, that plain and short questions and answers are the most effectual way of gradually instilling religious instruction into tender minds. We must feed them with milk, and not with strong meat, which, as yet, they are unable to bear: not discouraging them at their first outset, by obliging them to learn a multitude of words they in no degree understand; but adapting ourselves to the weakness of their capacity, beginning with the history of the Bible, the more necessary articles of our holy faith, and the plainer and more general precepts of Christian morals. Haughty looks or an angry tone may increase their aversion to what is serious, and make them eager to get rid of us; but an insinuating and agreeable manner may gain their affection, and make religion appear to them venerable and lovely. Familiar comparisons, examples from history, and appeals to conscience, must often illustrate and enforce these instructions. To impress all on their minds, tedious as it may seem, at one time the same sentiments, and even words must be repeated

over and over again, and at other times the same sentiment presented in various points of light, that the young learner may not mistake our meaning, or remain unaffected. For doing all this, prudence, gravity, condescension, meekness, patience, are requisite. Perhaps, all things weighed, it is more difficult to cathechise than to preach well. It might greatly promote the interests of religion, if men of eminent piety and abilities were set apart to give themselves wholly to this important work, for which the other duties of ministers leave them too little or no leisure.

" Parochial visitation, if managed in a way easy to plan, I will not say easy to execute, would be equally useful. But a formal visit once in a year, with a short prayer, and a few general advices, is, I am afraid, a bodily exercise which profiteth little. It is a weariness to the flesh, of small service to the great ends of our office, unless as it affords some opportunity to gain the affection of those intrusted to our care; and this it will hardly do, if we do not carry our connexion and intercourse with them beyond these formalities, gladly lending them our friendly aid when it may any how advance their spiritual welfare, and in such cases, not overlooking even the meanest and poorest of our people. The discovering a pure disinterested affection, a sincere desire to oblige, and a good stock of discretion, candour, and charity, encourages them to

unbosom to us their spiritual joys and griefs, to ask our counsel in their perplexities, and freely to impart to us their doubts and objections against religion. Thus we may learn their various circumstances, and instruct, exhort, reprove, and comfort them accordingly. Sermons like arrows shot at a venture seldom hit the mark, when we know not the character of our hearers; and, in many instances, our knowledge of their character must be imperfect, if we contract no familiarity with them. Much good, however, might be done even by civil visits, could we learn the art of being grave without affectation, and cheerful without levity; never leaving a company without dropping something to render them wiser or better.

"There are, however, circumstances in which our visits are peculiarly seasonable. Sometimes, when families are favoured with signal mercies and deliverances, our advice may restrain their joy within proper bounds; remind them of the precarious nature of temporal comforts; and excite a thankful sense and a suitable improvement of God's goodness. But our visits bid fairest to be acceptable, and if wisely improved, useful too, when God brings upon a family afflictive providences, or when the Lord maketh the heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth it. The mind is then more susceptible of serious impressions, and hearkens with avidity to what in the day of prosperity was despised. Yet, so various are the out-

ward troubles and inward distresses of mankind, that almost every day we meet with cases wholly new to us, and which we are quite at a loss how to manage. So opposite too are the opinions and tempers of people in distress, that what is best calculated to strike one, makes not the least impression on another; and what is necessary to rouse one from security, would sink another in despair. Security, however, is the more common and dangerous extreme; and too great indulgence has worse consequences than too great severity. They, therefore, mistake it greatly, who send for ministers on a death-bed, only to speak to them the language of comfort, and to pray for mercy to their souls. Promising pardon to those who feel not their spiritual maladies, is saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. But men love to be flattered and deceived; and, therefore, one's being much sent for by people of all characters to visit the sick, is a presumption he has no great talent of rousing their consciences. After all, where the concerns of the soul have been neglected to a death-bed, it is to be feared that such visits are oftener pernicious to the healthy than profitable to the diseased. We ought not, however, to neglect them; because diseases which wear the most threatening aspect may not prove mortal; because the call of the gospel extends to every living man; and because this, when prudently managed, is a proper opportunity to warn

bystanders not to defer the work of conversion to so unfit a season.

" Reconciling differences is a work highly suitable to the character of ambassadors of the Prince of peace. Not that it becomes them to be judges and dividers in matters of property; but when unhappy differences arise betwixt Christian friends, the pastors of a church should do their best timeously to cement them. I say, timeously; for divisions, like diseases, when neglected in their first beginnings, become incurable; and evil-minded people, who delight in sowing tares, or in watering them where already sown, will not be wanting to insinuate that such an affront, or such a neglect, is unsupportable: so that we cannot be too speedy in fortifying the parties at variance against these malicious artifices, provided we have got a firm hold of their esteem and confidence, and fully convinced them, we mean our advice for their mutual benefit. To conduct our friendly offices with success, we must beware of discovering partiality, by listening too favourably to one side of the question. When a superior is in the wrong, we must not diminish the respect due to his station, by saying so too bluntly in the presence of his inferior, but rather take him aside, and endeavour privately to convince him of his fault. Nor, when parties are together, ought we to suffer them to debate the cause of their differences. This would generally tend to widen the

breach, and to imbitter and chafe their spirits more than before. We should rather advise them to demean themselves as the disciples of Jesus, by forgetting and forgiving what is past.

" In private reproof, what zeal for God, and what tender compassion for perishing souls is needful, to overcome that aversion every good-natured man must feel to tell another he has done amiss, and which every wise man must feel to offend or to distress those whose friendship he values! What skill, to temper severity with mildness, and to proportion our censures to the degree of the fault, and to the character and circumstances of the offender! What prudence, to seize the properest season, and to choose the fittest manner, of administering this bitter medicine! What presence of mind, to detect the weakness of those pretences, by which the reproved would vindicate his conduct!

" There is another duty, incumbent on ministers as such, more difficult than any I have yet mentioned; and that is, to show themselves patterns of good works, Tit. ii. 7, and to be examples to others in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim. iv. 12. The setting a good example is not only a moral duty, incumbent on them in common with others, but seems given them in charge, as a part of their sacred office, and an instituted mean for saving of souls. Hence Paul enjoins Timothy, 1 Tim.

iv. 16, 'Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.' A holy exemplary behaviour gives a force and energy to sermons, which learning, genius, and eloquence, could never have procured them. When a minister's life proves that he is in earnest, his admonitions strike with authority on the conscience, and sink deep into the heart, while the strongest reasonings against sin have little effect, if hearers can apply the bitter proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself.'

"Ministers, as guides to their flock, should not only cautiously avoid what is in itself unlawful, but what, if practised by others, would prove to them a probable occasion of stumbling. Many things have no intrinsic evil, and yet are so near the confines of vice, that uncommon prudence is necessary to indulge in them without being defiled. As such prudence is extremely rare, ministers, ere they give any practice the sanction of their example, had need to examine, not only what is safe for them in particular, but what is safe for that flock of Christ, to which they ought to be patterns and guides. When travelling alone we may choose the shortest and most convenient road, though it be somewhat slippery and dangerous, provided we are conscious we have prudence enough to guard against those dangers. But he must be a merciless and unfaithful guide, who, knowing that a number of weak thoughtless

children would follow his footsteps, should choose a path, safe to himself, but in which it was morally certain the greatest part of his followers would stumble and fall. This adds considerably to the difficulties of our office; not only as all restraints are in their own nature burdensome, but as it is often hard to resist the importunity of those who traduce our caution, as a being righteous overmuch.

"Justly did the pious Leighton observe, that even the best would have cause to faint and give over in it, (the Christian ministry) were not our Lord the chief shepherd, were not all our sufficiency laid up in his richfulness, and all our insufficiency covered in his gracious acceptance.

"But our chief danger arises from indwelling corruption. Our office obliges us to preach and pray on many occasions when our frames are dull and languid. Hence, there is a danger lest we grow accustomed to speak of God, and Christ, and eternity, without feeling the importance of what we speak, and realizing our own concern in it. If we fall into such a habit, the most striking truths, preached by ourselves or others, make no impression upon us; and that quick and powerful word, which ought to recover from deadness and formality, loses its power and energy. Thus we go on from evil to worse; have no relish for our work; do as little in it as we possibly can, and do that little without spirit: drawing nigh to

God with the mouth, and honouring him with the lip, while the heart is far from him. Ministers ought to be men of superior knowledge. But too often superior knowledge produces contempt of others, and puffeth up with pride and self-conceit. Pride inclines us stiffly to maintain an error we have once asserted, even in spite of the clearest evidence against it; to compose sermons, with a view to our own honour rather than the glory of God and edification of souls; and hence, to make an idle show of learning, genius, or eloquence, which, though it pleases the ear, neither enlightens the understanding nor affects the heart. Flattery greatly strengthens this self-conceit. When that intoxicating poison is artfully conveyed, few are entirely proof against it. Though persons applaud us who are no competent judges, or whose heart is at variance with their lips, self-conceit regards their praise as well founded.

"If we escape this rock, the opposite extreme of discouragement may have a fatal influence. Some, through too close application to study, contract unhappy disorders in their blood and spirits; and Satan takes advantage of this, to raise a world of darkness and confusion in their minds; so that they are pressed out of measure, and ready to sink under their burden. God may write bitter things against us, and cause us to possess the iniquities of our youth. Possibly,

some special opportunity of serving God was afforded us and neglected; or, as Solomon, we may have forsaken him, after he hath spoken to us twice. By this, the Comforter, which should comfort our souls, is provoked to withdraw, and to leave us for a long season in a languishing frame. Thus we go mourning without the sun, our feet lame, our knees feeble, our hands hanging down. Performing any difficult duty appears impossible; and even the grasshopper is a burden.

"After a series of years spent in vigorous endeavours to promote the cause of truth and holiness, ignorance, profanity, and contempt of the gospel too often continue to prevail. From the pulpit, and in private too, we address our hearers in the warmest manner: but we preach, and pray, and watch, and labour in vain. He that was unclean, is unclean still; and he that was filthy, filthy still. We are ready to say, Why exert ourselves thus to no purpose? Why cultivate a soil, which, after our utmost care, remains barren? Hence, ministers, after laudable diligence in the first years of their ministry, are in danger of sparing themselves overmuch, and of doing little in the duties of their office, save what decency and character constrain them to do. The temptation gains additional force, when those among whom we have faithfully laboured fail in due gratitude and respect, and discover an eager-

ness to pick faults in our sermons or private behaviour. Though we act with the purest intentions, every thing is taken by a wrong handle, and sure to displease. This froward censorious spirit our Lord beautifully describes, Luke vii. 31—35. Conscious that we merit better treatment, we sometimes peevishly take pet at the public; and when we find they are resolved to blame even without cause, become less concerned to avoid just cause of censure.

" Once more.—As we grow older, aversion to fatigue, and love of ease, grow upon us, and often lead us to neglect or delay our duty, when some motive stronger than indolence does not push us on to the discharge of it. Nay, indolence, feeble and languishing as it seems, often triumphs over the more violent passions; and as it restrains bad men from much wickedness, so it hinders the servants of Christ from doing a deal of good which it might and ought to have done. It puts off till to-morrow what had better been dispatched to-day. To study a subject to the bottom, and to compose with exactness, is such a fatigue, that if we have a certain readiness of expression, we are apt to get rid of it, and to venture into the pulpit with little preparation. It is hard to resist this bias, to prosecute studies which, though necessary, are perhaps unpleasant; to allow a suitable proportion of time to every different duty; and resolutely to employ our precious hours to the

best advantage. And when indolence, by long habit, has acquired force, the overcoming it is next to impossible.

" It is an honourable, but it is also a laborious and arduous service: and no man, by his own strength, is sufficient for it. How vain then, and presumptuous, are such who, depending on their natural abilities, hastily thrust themselves into the sacred office, without spending suitable time in preparatory studies, and without any eye to Christ to assist, to accept, and to prosper their labours! What can be expected but that, being unlearned and unstable, they should wrest the scripture to the destruction of themselves and others? Even men of the most distinguished talents and purest zeal, when they survey the extent and importance of their charge, and the strict account they must one day give of their stewardship, have cause, with Moses, exceedingly to quake and fear; and with David, to plead, 'Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight, no flesh living shall be justified.' How dreadful, then, to engage in such work, without delight in it, fitness for it, or regard for its great end and design!

" If my heart deceived me not, my ends in entering into the ministry were pure and disinterested. I have seen no cause to repent my choice of a profession. I am not ashamed of the gospel of

Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. I esteem it my honour and happiness to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. But I lament that I entered on the sacred function ere I had spent one-fourth of the time in reading, in meditation, and in devotional exercises, which would have been necessary, in any tolerable degree, to qualify me for it. I have made some feeble efforts to supply these defects. But, besides the public duties of my office, and a variety of unavoidable avocations, indolence of temper, the employing too much time in studies or labours less important, and other culpable causes, partly formerly hinted, partly needless or improper to be mentioned, have been considerable bars in the way of my success. Ye who now enjoy the golden season of youth, be careful to improve it to better purposes. The advantages you now have for acquiring gifts and grace may never return in any future period.

"God has given me a charge, to meditate on divine things, and give myself wholly to them: and friends and innocent recreations must not claim those hours which ought to be consecrated to God and his people. I would say to friends, I would say to innocent recreations, as Nehemiah to Sanballat, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?' Neh.

vi. 3. If the apostles thought it unreasonable to leave the word of God, in order to redress abuses committed in administrating the alms of the church, shall we leave it for causes of a less worthy nature?"

It will help to explain some of the expressions in these extracts to remark, that this discourse was delivered on Dr. Erskine's entering on his pastoral duties in the New Grayfriars church, when he came to Edinburgh. In the conclusion of the discourse he thus addresses those who were placed under his ministry:—

"Send up your warmest addresses to the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, that his grace may be sufficient for me, and his strength perfected in my weakness: that in my closet he would enable me to incline my ear to wisdom, and to apply my heart to understanding; yea, to cry after knowledge, and lift up my voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and to search for her as for hid treasures: that in the pulpit, and in the more private duties of my office, he would touch my cold heart and faltering lips with a live coal from his altar, and give me the tongue of the learned, to speak words in season to every soul; that the law of truth may be in my mouth, and no iniquity found in my lips; that I may walk with God in peace and equi-

ty, and turn many away from iniquity. Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; and that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men; for all men have not faith. 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. Pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit; and watch thereto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. Eph. vi. 18, 19. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you, through divine strength, the good and the right way. For my friends and brethren's sake, I will now say, Peace be within you; and because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good. I conclude with the prayer of the Psalmist, Ps. li. 9—13, 15, 'Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.'"

REV. HENRY MARTYN.

Who that has paid the slightest attention to the various works of Christian biography, which have appeared within these last years, has not read with peculiar interest the life of that eminent servant of God, the late *Henry Martyn*, the zealous, self-denied, and indefatigable missionary in India and Persia, and the well-known translator of the New Testament into the Persian language? I mean not here to enter into a detail of his eventful and affecting history, but shall extract such passages of his memoirs as more particularly relate to the duties of the Christian ministry, and as may suggest useful hints respecting that spirit of holy devotedness to the service of God, and tender compassion for the souls of men, with which these duties ought to be discharged.

MR. MARTYN'S STATE WHILE AT COLLEGE.

"The tenor of Henry Martyn's life during this and the succeeding year he passed at college, was to the eye of the world in the highest degree amiable and commendable. He was outwardly moral, with little exception was unwearied in application, and exhibited marks of no ordinary talent. But whatever may have been his external conduct, and whatever his capacity in literary pursuits, he seems to have been totally ignorant of spiritual things, and to have lived 'without God in the world.' The consideration, that God chiefly regards the *motives* of our actions,—a consideration so momentous, and so essential to the character of a real Christian, appears as yet never to have entered his mind: and even when it did, as was the case at this time, it rested there as a theoretic notion never to be reduced to practice. His own account of himself is very striking. Speaking of June 1799, he says, '* * * (a friend alluded to before) attempted to persuade me that I ought to attend to reading, not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God. This seemed *strange* to me, but *reasonable.* I resolved, therefore, to *maintain this* opinion thenceforth; but never designed, that I remember, that it should *affect my conduct.*' What a decisive mark this of an unrenewed mind!—What an affecting proof that light

may break in on the understanding, whilst there is not so much as the dawn of it on the heart!"

THE MANNER IN WHICH HE SPENT HIS TIME.

"Rose at six, and passed the morning in great tranquillity. Learnt by heart some of the three first chapters of Revelations. This is to me the most searching and alarming part of the Bible; yet now with humbling hope I trusted, that the censures of my Lord did not belong to me; except that those words, Rev. ii. 3, 'For my name's sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted,' were far too high a testimony for me to think of appropriating to myself; nevertheless I besought the Lord, that whatever I had been, I might now be perfect and complete in all the will of God.—Men frequently admire me, and I am pleased, but I abhor the pleasure I feel; oh! did they but know that my root is rottenness! Heard Professor Farish preach at Trinity Church, on Luke xii. 4, 5, and was deeply impressed with the reasonableness and necessity of the fear of God. Felt it to be a light matter to be judged of man's judgment; why have I not awful apprehensions of the glorious Being at all times? The particular promise, 'him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out,' &c. dwelt a long time on my mind,

and diffused an affectionate reverence of God. I see a great work before me now, namely, the subduing and mortifying of my perverted will. What am I that I should *dare* to do my own will, even if I were not a sinner?—but now how plain, how reasonable to have the love of Christ constraining me to be his faithful willing servant, cheerfully taking up the cross he shall appoint me."

HIS DEEP HUMILITY AND TENDERNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

"If God's word did not unequivocally declare the desperate wickedness of the heart, I should sink down in despair. Nothing but infinite grace can save me. But that which most grieves me is, that I am not humbled at the contemplation of myself.

"When I look back on every day, I may say I have lost it. So much time mispent; so many opportunities lost of doing good, by spreading the knowledge of the truth by conversation, by example; so little zeal for God, or love to man; so much vanity, and levity, and pride, and selfishness, that I may well tremble at the world of iniquity within. If ever I am saved it must be by grace. May God give me a humble, contrite,

childlike, affectionate spirit, and a willingness to forego my ease continually for his service.

"What is my Journal but a transcript of my follies? What else is the usual state of my mind but weakness, vanity, and sin? O that I could meditate constantly upon divine things; that the world and its poor concerns did no more distract my heart from God. But how little I know or experience of the power of Christ! Truly I find my proneness to sin, and that generally prevailing ignorance of my mind by which all motives to diligence and love are made to disappear, to be my misery. Now, therefore, I desire to become a fool, that I may be wise: 'the meek will he guide in judgment.'

"I felt humbled at the remembrance of mispent hours, and while this frame of mind continued, all the powers of my soul were perceptibly refreshed.

"Yet O how free is his love to the chief of sinners! How many of my days are lost, if their worth is to be measured by the standard of prevailing heavenly mindedness! I want, above all things, a willingness to be despised. What but the humbling influence of the spirit, showing me my vileness and desperate wickedness, can ever produce such an habitual temper?

"Mr. Simeon's sermon this evening, on 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, discovered to me my corruption and vileness more than any sermon I ever had heard.

O that I had a more piercing sense of the divine presence! How much sin in the purest services! If I were sitting in heavenly places with Christ, or rather with my thoughts habitually there, how would every duty, but especially this of social prayer, become easy.

"It is hurtful to my conscience to let slight excuses for an omission of duty to prevail. O what cause for shame and self-abhorrence arises from the review of every day! In morning prayer, as usual of late, my soul longed to leave its corruptions to think of Christ and live by him. I laboured to represent to myself powerful considerations to stir up my slothful heart to activity, particularly that which respects giving instruction to, and praying with people. I set before myself the infinite mercy of being out of hell—of being *permitted* to do the will of God—of the love of Christ, which was so disinterested—how he passed his life in going about doing good—how those men who are truly great, the blessed apostles, did the same—how the holy angels would delight to be employed on errands of mercy. A ray of light seems to break upon my mind for a moment, and discovers the folly and ignorance of this sinful heart, but it quickly returns to its former hardness. My will is to sit in all day reading, not making any effort to think, but letting the book fill the mind with a succession of notions: when the time comes for reading the scrip-

ture and prayer, then it recoils. When an opportunity offers of speaking for the good of others, or assisting a poor person, then it makes a thousand foolish excuses. It would rather go on wrapt in self, and leave the world to perish. Ah! what a heart is mine! The indistinctness of my view of its desperate wickedness is terrible to me, that is, when I am capable of feeling any terror. But now, my soul, rise from earth and hell—shall Satan lead me captive at his will, when Christ ever liveth to make intercession for the vilest worm? O thou, whose I am by creation, preservation, redemption, no longer my own, but his who lived, and died, and rose again, once more would I resign this body and soul, mean and worthless as they are, to the blessed disposal of thy holy will!—May I have a heart to love God and his people, the flesh being crucified!"

HIS FIRST SERMON.

"On Thursday, November 10, he preached for the first time at Trinity Church to a numerous and earnestly attentive congregation, upon part of that address of Jesus to the woman of Samaria:—'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water,' John iv. 10; when it was

his fervent desire and prayer to enter fully into the solemn spirit of those well-known lines,

> ‘ I'd preach as though I ne'er should preach again :
> I'd preach as dying unto dying men.’

Nor could words characterize more justly the usual strain of his preaching: for whether the congregation he addressed were great or small, learned and refined, or poor and ignorant, he spake as one who had a message to them from God, and who was impressed with the consideration, that both he and they must shortly stand before the Judge of quick and dead.

“ The burthens and difficulties of his sacred employments lay heavily at first on Mr. Martyn's mind, and considerably depressed his spirits: but he endeavoured, he writes in a letter to his earliest friend, to keep in view ‘ the unreasonableness of his discontent, (who was a brand plucked out of the fire,) and the glorious blessedness of the ministerial work.’ At times, he confesses, he was tried with a ‘ sinful dislike of his parochial duty;’ and seemed frequently ‘ as a stone speaking to stones;’ and he laments that ‘ want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer through incessant sermon-making, had produced much strangeness between God and his soul.’ ‘ Every time,’ he remarked, ‘ that I open the scriptures, my thoughts are about a sermon or exposition, so that even in private I seem to be reading in

public.' Young ministers, those especially who are placed in extensive spheres of action, are not ignorant of the temptations of which Mr. Martyn here complains, and to them it must be a consolation to be assured, that the same afflictions were accomplished in one of the most devoted and most faithful of their brethren."

HIS SPIRITUALITY OF MIND.

" 'Whenever I can say 'thy will be done,' teach me to do thy will, O God, for thou art my God; it is like throwing ballast out of an air-balloon, my soul ascends immediately, and light and happiness shine around me.' Such was his thirst after this Christian temper! Such his enjoyment of its blessedness!

" At the beginning of the present year, Mr. Martyn was apprehensive, we have seen, of having bestowed too much time on public duties—too little on those which are private and personal. He was fully persuaded that in order to take heed effectually to his ministry, he must, in obedience to the apostolical injunction, take heed primarily to 'himself;' and this in fact was his settled course and practice. He would sometimes set apart seasons for humiliation and prayer, and would frequently spend whole evenings in devotion. Of the Bible he could ever affirm, 'thy word is very

pure, therefore, thy servant loveth it.' 'The word of Christ dwelt richly in him in all wisdom.' Large portions of it did he commit to memory, repeating them during his solitary walks, at those times when he was not expressly meditating on some *scriptural subject*, which was his general custom; and so deep was his veneration for the word of God, that when a suspicion arose in his mind, that any other book he might be studying was about to gain an undue influence over his affections, he *instantly* laid it aside, nor would he resume it till he had felt and realized the paramount excellence of the divine oracles: he could not rest satisfied, till all those lesser lights which were beginning to dazzle him, had disappeared before the effulgence of the scriptures.

"How much he loved secret prayer, and how vigilantly he engaged in the exercise of it, may be seen in the subjoined remarks of his on that subject:—'I felt the need of setting apart a day for the restoration of my soul by solemn prayer: my views of eternity are become dim and transient. I could live for ever in prayer if I could always speak to God. I sought to pause and consider what I wanted, and to look up with fear and faith, and I found the benefit, for my soul was soon composed to that devout sobriety, which I knew by its sweetness to be its proper frame. I was engaged in prayer in the manner I like, *deep seriousness:* at the end of it, I felt great fear

of forgetting the presence of God, and of leaving him as soon as I should leave the posture of devotion. I was led through the mists of unbelief, and spake to God as one that was true, and rejoiced exceedingly that he was holy and faithful: I endeavoured to consider myself as being alone on the earth with him, and that greatly promoted my approach to his presence. My prayer for a meek and holy sobriety was granted: O how sweet the dawn of heaven.'"

HIS VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"The happiness Mr. Martyn enjoyed in prosecuting his ministerial vocation, received at this time (referring to his return to Cambridge) a wonderful increase: whilst *suffering* the will of God with the meek resignation of faith, he was enabled to *do* it with all the delightful fervency of love. 'Blessed be God,' he found reason to say, with exceeding joy and gratitude, '*I feel myself to be his minister.* This thought, which I can hardly describe came in the morning after reading Brainerd. I wish for no service but the service of God, in labouring for souls on earth, and to do his will in heaven.' As far as the external duties of his office were concerned, only this variation occurred, he became extremely diligent in the humble but most important work of catechizing children; giving sometimes a great

part of his evenings to the task, and leaving the society he most valued for the sake of it. He determined likewise upon preaching more frequently extempore—(for he had already at times adopted the practice,) partly from thinking it upon the whole more profitable to himself, as well as to the congregation—and partly from the desire of devoting the time spent in writing sermons to other purposes. He by no means, however, renounced these compositions. On the contrary, he enjoined it upon himself as a rule, never to pass a week without writing a sermon.

"In visiting his flock, and thus preaching from house to house, Mr. Martyn's perseverance kept pace with the heightened pleasure and satisfaction he experienced in his divine calling."

HIS MANNER OF SPENDING THE SABBATH.

"'Hasten, O hasten the day when I shall leave the world and come to thee; when I shall no more be vexed, and astonished, and pained at the universal wickedness of this lost earth. But here would I abide thy time, and spend and be spent for the salvation of any poor soul, and lie down at the feet of sinners, and beseech them not to plunge into an eternity of torment.'

"How honourable, and what a delight the sabbath was to Mr. Martyn we have already seen; it might be called with him 'a kind of transfigu-

ration day, when his garments shone with peculiar lustre.' Can it be deemed irrelevant then to advert again to the state of his mind, as delineated by himself during some of those sacred seasons at this time?

"Sept. 30.—'My mind, this morning, easily ascended to God in peaceful solemnity. I succeeded in finding access to God and being alone with him. Could I but enjoy this life of faith more steadily, how much should I 'grow in grace,' and be renewed in the spirit of my mind. At such seasons of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, when the world, and self, and eternity, are nearly in their right places, not only are my views of duty clear and comprehensive, but the proper motives have a more constraining influence.'

"Oct. 28.—'This has been in general a happy day. In the morning, through grace, I was enabled by prayer to maintain a calm recollection of myself—and what was better, the presence of my dear Redeemer. From church I walked to our garden, where I was above an hour I trust with Christ, speaking to him chiefly of my future life in his service. I determined on entire devotedness, though 'with trembling;' for the flesh dreads crucifixion. But should I fear pain, when Christ was so agonized for me? No—come what will, I am determined through God, to be a fellow-worker with Christ. I recollected, with

comfort, that I was speaking to the great Creator, who can make such a poor weak worm as myself more than conqueror. At church I found, by the attention of the people, that the fervour of my spirit yesterday had been conveyed into my sermon. I came to my rooms, rejoicing to be alone again, and to hold communion with God.'

" The last day of the year found him 'rejoicing at the lapse of time, but sorrowing at his unprofitableness.' 'So closes,' he remarks, 'the easy part of my life; encircled by every earthly comfort, and caressed by friends, I may scarcely be said to have experienced trouble; but now farewell ease, if I might presume to conjecture. O Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit! Thou hast redeemed me, thou God of truth: may I be saved by thy grace, and be sanctified to do thy will now, and to all eternity, through Jesus Christ.'"

The following remarks occur in his Journal during the interval between his quitting Cambridge and his leaving England.

" April 10.—Walked out to buy books, and strove to be diligent in thinking of *my subject.** When I got into the spirit of it, Christ appeared at times inexpressibly precious to me.

* Referring to a subject which he chose daily for meditation.

" April 14. Sunday.—I felt very unconcerned about men's opinions before and after my sermon. Before it, I could solemnly appeal to God, and found comfort and pleasure in doing so, that I desired his glory alone—that I detested the thought of seeking my own praise, or taking pleasure in hearing it. The rest of the evening I continued in a very ardent frame; but in private I was taught, by former experience, to labour after a calm and sober devotedness to God, and that my fervour might show itself in a steady course of action. My soul felt growing in holiness nigh unto the blessed God, with my understanding, will, and affections turned towards him. Surely many of the children of God have been praying for me to-day. May the Lord return their prayers tenfold into their own bosom.

" April 15.—O may God confirm my feeble resolutions! O what have I to do but labour, and pray, and fast, and watch for the salvation of my soul, and those of the heathen world. Ten thousand times more than ever do I feel devoted to that precious work. O gladly shall this base blood be shed, every drop of it, if India can be benefited in one of her children—if but one of these creatures of God Almighty might be brought home to his duty.

" April 16.—How careful should I and all be in our ministry, not to break the bruised reed! Alas, do I think that a schoolboy, a raw acade-

mic, should be likely to lead the hearts of men? What a knowledge of man, and acquaintance with the scriptures—what communion with God, and study of my own heart, ought to prepare me for the awful work of a messenger from God on the business of the soul.

"April 22.—I do not wish for any heaven upon earth besides that of preaching the precious gospel of Jesus Christ to immortal souls. May these weak desires increase and strengthen with every difficulty.

"April 27.—My constant unprofitableness seemed to bar my approach to God. But I considered for all that was past the blood of Christ would atone; and that, for the future, God would that moment give me grace to perform my duty.

"May 9.—O my soul, when wilt thou live consistently? When shall I walk steadily with God? When shall I hold heaven constantly in view? How time glides away—how is death approaching—how soon must I give up my account—how are souls perishing—how does their blood call out to us to labour, and watch, and pray for them that remain."

Mr. Martyn thus expresses himself during his voyage to India:

"Sept. 14.—Found great pleasure and profit in Milner's Church History. I love to converse as it were with those holy bishops and martyrs,

with whom I hope, through grace, to spend a happy eternity.

"Sept. 15. Sunday.—He that testifieth these things saith, 'Behold, I come quickly, Amen, even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!' Happy John! though shut out from society and the ordinances of grace: happy wast thou in thy solitude, when by it thou wast induced thus gladly to welcome the Lord's words, and repeat them with a prayer. Read and preached on Acts xiii. 38, 39. In the latter part, where I was led to speak, without preparation, on the all-sufficiency of Christ to save sinners, who came to him with all their sins without delay, I was carried away with a divine aid to speak with freedom and energy: my soul was refreshed, and I retired, seeing reason to be thankful. The weather was fair and calm, inviting the mind to tranquillity and praise; the ship just moved upon the face of the untroubled ocean. I went below in hopes of reading Baxter's Call to the Unconverted; but there was no getting down, as they were taking out water; so I sat with the seamen on the gun deck. As I walked in the evening at sun-set, I thought with pleasure, but a few more suns, and I shall be where my sun shall no more go down. Read Isaiah the rest of the evening—sometimes happy, but at other times tired, and desiring to take up some other religious book—but I *saw it*

an important duty to check this slighting of the word of God.

" Sept. 16.—Two things were much in my mind this morning in prayer, the necessity of entering more deeply into my heart, and labouring after humiliation, and, for that reason, setting apart times for fasting; as also to devote times for solemn prayer for fitness in the ministry; especially love for souls, and for the effusion of the spirit on heathen lands, according to God's command.

" Sept. 23.—We are just to the south of all Europe, and I bid adieu to it for ever, without a wish of ever revisiting it, and still less with any desire of taking up my rest in the strange land to which I am going. Ah! no,—farewell perishing world! 'To me to live' shall be 'Christ.' I have nothing to do here but to labour as a stranger, and by secret prayer and outward exertion, do as much as possible for the church of Christ and my own soul, till my eyes close in death, and my soul wings its way to a brighter world. Strengthen me, O God my Saviour, that whether living or dying I may be thine.

" The extreme weakness and languor of my body made me fear I should never be used as a preacher in India. But what means this anxiety? Is it not of God that I am led into outward difficulties, that my faith may be tried? Suppose you

are obliged to return, or that you never see India, but wither and die here, what is that to you? Do the will of God where you are, and leave the rest to him. I found great satisfaction in reflecting that my hourly wisdom was not to repine, and to look for a change, but to consider what is my duty in existing circumstances, and then to do it, in dependance upon grace.'

"The violent and increasing opposition he experienced from many of the more intelligent part of the passengers, and the discouraging inattention he too often perceived amongst the other class of his hearers, caused him to 'grieve on their account, and to *humble himself* before God.' 'I go down,' he says, 'and stand in the midst of a few, without their taking the slightest notice of me: Lord, it is for thy sake I suffer such slights —let me persevere notwithstanding.' But though he mourned on their account, he was 'contented to be left without fruit, if such were the will of God.' Conscious of having delivered the message faithfully, and trusting that, with respect to both descriptions of his auditors, he had commended himself to their consciences, if he had not reached their hearts, his own peace of mind was not affected; and he affirms that he was 'as happy as he could be without more grace;' representing himself as enjoying 'peaceful thoughts —tender recollections—and happy prospects.' How could he fail of pleasantness and peace,

when this was the genuine expression of the sentiments of his soul? 'I am born for God only. Christ is nearer to me than father, or mother, or sister—a nearer relation—a more affectionate friend; and I rejoice to follow him and to love him. Blessed Jesus! thou art all I want—a forerunner to me in all I ever shall go through, as a Christian, minister, or missionary.'

"Whilst the breezes wafted Mr. Martyn towards the destined scene of his labours, many a sigh did he continue to breathe under a sense of his own sinfulness and weakness; and many a petition did he pour forth for the nation to whom he was sent. He felt it 'good and suitable to walk through this world overwhelmed with contrition and love—receiving with grateful contentment every painful dispensation, because not worthy to enjoy the light of this world,'—praying that 'God would glorify himself with the gifts and graces of all his creatures, and make him take his place at the bottom of them unnoticed, unknown, and forgotten.' 'O when the spirit is pleased,' said he, 'to show his creature but a few scattered specimens of his ungodly days, yea, of his godly ones—how universally and desperately wicked doth he appear. O that I knew how to be duly abased. What shall I think of myself in comparison of others? How ought I to kiss the very dust beneath their feet, from a consciousness of my inferiority; and in my thoughts of God, and his

dealings with me, how ought I to be wrapped up in constant astonishment.' Then, after setting apart a day for fasting and humiliation, he began to pray for the setting up of God's kingdom in the world, especially in India, and had such energy and delight in prayer as he never had before experienced. 'My whole soul,' he said, 'wrestled with God. I knew not how to leave off crying to him to fulfil his promises, chiefly pleading his own glorious power. I do not know that any thing would be a heaven to me but the service of Christ, and the enjoyment of his presence. O how sweet is life when spent in his service! I am going upon a work immediately according to the mind of Christ, and my glorious Lord, whose power is uncontrollable, can easily open a way for his feeble follower through the thickest of the ranks of his enemies. And now, on let me go, smiling at my foes—how small are human obstacles before this mighty Lord! How easy is it for God to effect his purposes in a moment. What are inveterate prejudices when once the Lord shall set to his hand! In prayer, I had a most precious view of Christ, as a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. O how sweet was it to pray to him. I hardly knew how to contemplate with praise enough his adorable excellencies. Who can show forth his praise? I can conceive it to be a theme long enough for eterni-

ty. I want no other happiness—no other sort of heaven.'"

While in India, he heard with the sincerest grief, during his abode at Aldeen, of an order issued by government, (though it proved afterwards that he was misinformed,) to prevent the Baptists preaching and distributing tracts. On this his biographer observes:—

"So perplexed and excited was he by the intelligence, that it even deprived him of sleep; and he spoke afterwards with so much vehemence against the measures of government, as, upon reflection, to afford him matter for self-condemnation. 'I know not,' he said, 'what manner of spirit I am of; I fancy it is all zeal for God; but what a falsehood is this? I am severe against a governor, not making allowances for what he knows. O does it become me to be judging others? Did Jesus canvass the proceeding of government with the spirit of one of this world? I pray to be preserved from ever falling into this snare again. May I, with poverty of spirit, go on my way; and never again trouble myself with what does not belong to me! I trust I shall be able to distinguish between zeal and self-will. *Let me never fancy I have zeal till my heart overflows with love to every man living.*

"A Brahmin, of my own age, was performing his devotions to Gunga early this morning, when I was going to prayer. My soul was struck with the sovereignty of God, who, out of pure grace, had made such a difference in all the external circumstances of our lives. O let not that man's earnestness rise up against me at the last day. Yet I felt no tenderness of grief; nor in the morning did I feel any thing like due thankfulness to God's electing mercy, in making me thus to differ from the Brahmins. I have daily and hourly proofs of my corruption; for when does my heart come up to what my half-enlightened understanding approves? Yet I intend, through grace, to continue praying to the end for their poor precious souls, that the kingdom of God may be set up here."

The following extract shows both his zeal to be useful and the severity with which he condemned himself, for the mere omission of an opportunity to do good.

"October 28.—Rose very early, and was at the hospital at daylight. Waited there a long time, wandering up and down the wards, in hopes of inducing the men to get up and assemble: but it was in vain. I left three books with them, and went away, amidst the sneers and titters of the common soldiers. Certainly it is one of the

greatest crosses I am called to bear, to take pains to make people hear me. It is such a struggle between a sense of propriety and modesty on the one hand, and a sense of duty on the other, that I find nothing equal to it. I could force my way any where, in order to introduce a brother minister; but for myself I act with hesitation and pain. At night, from mere thoughtlessness, went on shore without tracts, and lost a better opportunity than I have yet had of distributing them among the people. My soul was dreadfully wounded at the recollection of it; and O may the conviction of my wickedness rest upon my soul all my days! How many souls will rise up in judgment against me at the last day, God only knows. The Lord forgive my guilty soul; deliver me from blood guiltiness; and make me to remember for what purpose I came hither.

"Distressed at times; I fear that I am not acting faithfully in warning those around me. But the shortest way to peace is to pray for a broken heart and submissive spirit: by this means my mind brightened up."

REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR 1807.

"Seven years have passed away since I was first called of God. Before the conclusion of

another seven years, how probable that these hands will have mouldered into dust! But be it so: my soul through grace hath received the assurance of eternal life, and I see the days of my pilgrimage shortening without a wish to add to their number. But O may I be stirred up to a farther discharge of my high and awful work, and laying aside, as much as may be, all carnal cares and studies, may I give myself to this 'one thing.' The last has been a year to be remembered by me, because the Lord has brought me safely to India, and permitted me to begin, in one sense, my missionary work. My trials in it have been very few; every thing has turned out better than I expected; loving kindnesses and tender mercies have attended me every step: therefore, here will I sing his praise. I have been an unprofitable servant, but the Lord hath not cut me off; I have been wayward and perverse, yet he hath brought me further on the way to Zion: here then, with sevenfold gratitude and affection, would I stop and devote myself to the blissful service of my adorable Lord. May he continue his patience, his grace, his directions, his spiritual influences, and I shall at last surely come off conqueror! May he speedily open my mouth to make known the mysteries of the gospel, and in great mercy grant that the heathen may receive it in great mercy and live!"

Speaking of Mr. Martyn's intercourse with the more wealthy Europeans in India, his biographer observes:—

"In vain did he endeavour, amongst the upper ranks, to introduce religious topics into conversation. 'I spoke,' said he, after visiting some of these, 'several times about religion to them, but the manner in which it was received damped all farther attempt. 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' How awful does the thought sometimes appear to me, that almost the whole world are united against God and his Christ. O thou injured Sovereign! O Lord, how long will it be ere thou plead thine own cause, and make bare thine arm in the sight of the nations? Let me in patience possess my soul; and though iniquity abound, may I never wax cold, but be brought safely through all this darkness and danger to a happier world! To thousands my word will, perhaps, prove 'a savour of death unto death.' Let me nevertheless go on steadily in the path which the Lord has marked out: perhaps some poor soul may be converted by what he shall hear from me; or if not, I shall have done my work.'"

The following extracts contain various highly valuable hints.

"The conversation with the Pundit more serious than it has yet been; and *I find that serious-*

ness in the declaration of the truths of the gospel, is likely to have more power than the clearest arguments conveyed in a trifling spirit. I told him, that now he had heard the word of Christ, he would not be tried at the last day by the same law as the other Brahmins and Hindoos who had never heard it, but in the same manner as myself and other Christians, and that I feared, therefore, he was in great danger. He said, as usual, that there were many ways to God, but I replied, there was no other Saviour but Christ, because no other Lord bought men with his blood and suffered their punishment for them. This effectually silenced him on that head: he then said, 'he had a house and children, and that to preserve them he must retain the favour of the world; that he and his friends despised idol worship, but that the world would call him wicked if he forsook the service of the gods.

"I left Dinapore to go to Monghir; spent the evening at Patna with Mr. ——, talking on literary subjects; but my soul was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt in not striving to lead the conversation to something that might be for his spiritual good. My general backwardness to speak on spiritual subjects before the unconverted, made me groan in spirit at such unfeelingness and unbelief. May the remembrance of what I am made to suffer for these neglects be one reason for greater zeal and love in the time to come!

" April 19.—A melancholy Lord's day! In the morning, at the appointed hour, I found some solemnity and tenderness: the whole desire of my soul seemed to be, that all the ministers in India might be eminently holy, and that there might be no remains of that levity or indolence in any of us which I found in myself.

" April 23.—After baptizing a child of ——, I left Monghir, and got on twenty-three miles to Dinapore, very sorrowful in mind, both from the recollection of having done nothing for the perishing souls I had been amongst, and from finding myself so unqualified to write on a spiritual subject which I had undertaken. Alas! the ignorance and carnality of my miserable soul! How contemptible must it be in the sight of God!

" April 24.—Still cast down at my utter inability to write any thing profitable on this subject, and at my execrable pride and ease of heart. O that I could weep with shame and sorrow in the dust for my wickedness and folly! Yet thanks are due to the Lord for showing me in this way, how much my heart has been neglected of late. I see by this how great are the temptations of a missionary to neglect his own soul. Apparently outwardly employed for God, my heart has been growing more hard and proud. Let me be taught that the first great business on earth is the sanctification of my own soul; so shall I be rendered more capable also of performing the duties

of the ministry, whether amongst the Europeans or Heathen, in a holy and solemn manner. O how I detest that levity to which I am so subject! How cruel and unfeeling it is! God is witness, that I would rather, from this day forward, weep day and night for the danger of immortal souls. But my wickedness seems to take such hold of me, that I cannot escape, and my only refuge is to commit my soul, with all its corruption, into the hands of Christ, to be sanctified and saved by the almighty power of grace. For what can I do with myself? My heart is so thoroughly corrupt that I cannot keep myself one moment from sin.

"April 29.—In prayer at the appointed hour; I felt solemnity of mind, and an earnest desire that the Lord would pour out a double portion of his spirit upon us his ministers in India; that every one of us may be eminent in holiness and ministerial gifts. If I were to judge from myself, I should fear God had forsaken his church; for I am most awfully deficient in the knowledge and experience requisite for a minister; but my dear brother Corrie, blessed be God, is a man of a better spirit. May he grow more and more in grace, and continue to be an example to us! Passed the day in reading and prayer, such as my prayers are. My soul struggled with corruption, yet I found the merit and grace of Jesus all sufficient and all supporting. Though my

guilt seemed like mountains, I considered it as no reason for departing from Christ, but rather of clinging to him more closely. Thus I got through the day, cast down, but not destroyed.

"May my soul in prayer never rest satisfied without the enjoyment of God! May all my thoughts be fixed on him! May I sit so loose to every employment here, that I may be able at a moment's warning to take my departure for another world! May I be taught to remember, that all other studies are merely subservient to the great work of ministering holy things to immortal souls! May the most holy works of the ministry, and those which require most devotedness of soul, be the most dear to my heart!

"What a source of perpetual delight have I in the precious book of God! O that my heart were more spiritual, to keep pace with my understanding, and that I could feel as I know! May my root and foundation be deep in love, and may I be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and may I be filled with all the fulness of God!" adding in his accustomed spirit of incessant watchfulness, "May the Lord, in mercy to my soul, save me from setting up an idol of any sort in his place, as I do by preferring even a work, professedly for him, to a communion with him. How obstinate the reluctance of the natu-

ral heart to love God! But, O my soul, be not deceived, thy chief work upon earth is to obtain sanctification, and to walk with God. 'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.' Let me learn from this, that to follow the direct injunctions of God about my own soul, is more my duty than to be engaged in other works under pretence of doing him service."

Mr. Martyn's tender affection to his relatives is strikingly expressed in the following observations on his receiving the painful intelligence of his eldest sister's death.

"A period of torturing suspense terminated in one of inexpressible sorrow. 'But blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord.' Gleams of this blessedness shone forth from the clouds of that dark dispensation with which Mr. Martyn was now visited. 'O my heart, my heart,' he exclaimed, 'is it, can it be true, that she has been lying so many months in the cold grave! Would that I could always remember it, or always forget it,—but to think for a moment of other things, and then to feel the remembrance of it come, as if for the first time, rends my heart asunder. When I look round upon the creation, and think that her eyes see it not, but have closed upon it for ever,—that I lie down in my bed, but that she has lain down in her grave—O! is it possible! I

wonder to find myself still in life—that the same tie that united us in life, had not brought death at the same moment to both. O great and gracious God ! what should I do without *thee !* But now thou art manifesting thyself as the God of all consolation to my soul; never was I so near thee: I stand on the brink, and I long to take my flight. There is not a thing in the world for which I could wish to live, except because it may please God to appoint me some work. And how shall my soul be ever thankful enough to thee, O thou most incomprehensibly glorious Saviour Jesus ! O what hast thou done to alleviate the sorrows of life ! And how great has been the mercy of God towards my family, in saving us all ! How dreadful would be the separation of relations in death, were it not for Jesus.'

" Acutely as Mr. Martyn suffered, such importance did he attach to those studies, which had in view the manifestation of the gospel to regions ' sitting in darkness and the shadow of death,' that he omitted the prosecution of them, at this period, only for *a single day.* It was a duty, he thought, incumbent on him to return to his work as soon as possible, however heavily his mind might be burthened, for his expressions many days afterward declare into what depths of grief he was sunk. ' My heart,' said he, ' is still oppressed, but it is not a ' sorrow that worketh death.' Though nature weeps at being de-

prived of all hopes of ever seeing this dear companion on earth, faith is hereby brought more into exercise. How sweet to feel dead to all below; to live only for eternity; to forget the short interval that lies between us and the spiritual world; and to live always *seriously.* The *seriousness* which this sorrow produces is indescribably precious. O that I could always retain it, when these impressions shall be worn away!'

"'I am happier here in this remote land,' he wrote in his Journal, 'where I hear so seldom of what happens in the world, than in England, where there are so many calls to look at the things that are seen. How sweet the retirement in which I live here. The precious word now my only study by means of translations. Though in a manner buried from the world, neither seeing nor seen by Europeans, here the time flows on with great rapidity: it seems as if life would be gone before any thing is done, or even before any thing is begun. I sometimes rejoice that I am not twenty-seven years of age, and that, unless God should order it otherwise, I may double the number in constant and successful labour. If not, God has many, many more instruments at command, and I shall not cease from my happiness, and scarcely from my work, by departing into another world. O what shall separate us from the love of Christ! Neither death nor life I am persuaded. O let me feel my security, that I

may be, as it were, already in heaven, that I may do all my work, as the angels do theirs; and O let me be ready for every work! be ready to leave this delightful solitude, or remain in it—to go out, or go in—to stay or depart, just as the Lord shall appoint. Lord, let me have no will of my own; or consider my true happiness as depending, in the smallest degree, on any thing that can befal the outward man, but as consisting altogether in conformity to God's will. May I have Christ here with me in this world, not substituting imagination in the place of faith; but seeing outward things as they really are, and thus obtaining a radical conviction of their vanity.'"

While in India, an overture of marriage was made to a lady in Britain, to whom he had been long attached. On this his biographer observes:

"This, for reasons which afterwards commended themselves to Mr. Martyn's own judgment, was now declined; on which occasion, suffering sharply as a man, but most meekly as a Christian, he said, 'the Lord sanctify this; and since this last desire of my heart is also withheld, may I turn away for ever from the world, and henceforth live forgetful of all but God. With thee, O my God, is no disappointment. I shall never have to regret that I have loved thee too well. Thou hast said, 'delight thyself in the

Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.'

" ' At first I was more grieved,' he wrote sometime afterwards, ' at the loss of my gourd, than of the perishing Ninevehs all around me: but now my earthly woes and earthly attachments seem to be absorbing in the vast concern of communicating the gospel to these nations. After this last lesson from God, on the vanity of the creature, I feel desirous to be nothing—to have nothing—to ask for nothing but what he gives.'

" He enjoyed a large measure of ' that perfect peace' in which those are kept whose minds are stayed on God. He was continually ' rejoicing in the solid ground of Jesus' imputed righteousness;' the greatness, the magnificence, the wisdom of which filled his mind; and he was continually thinking ' O how is every hour lost that is not spent in the love and contemplation of God, my God. O send out thy light and thy truth, that I may live always sincerely, always affectionately, towards God! To live without sin I cannot expect in this world, but to desire to live without it may be the experience of every moment;' and he closed the year like him who, at the end of a psalm of holy and joyful aspirations, exclaims, ' I have gone astray like a lost sheep,' in the following strain of brokenness of spirit and abasement of soul: ' I seem to myself permitted to exist only through the inconceivable compas-

sion of God. When I think of my shameful incapacity for the ministry, arising from my neglect, I see reason to tremble, though I cannot weep. I feel willing to be a neglected outcast, unfit to be made useful to others, provided my dear brethren are prosperous in their ministry.'"

Mr. Martyn's zeal for promoting the good of souls is strikingly represented in the following passages:—

"In consequence of the state of the weather at this season of the year, the public celebration of divine service on the sabbath was suspended for a considerable time at Dinapore; a circumstance as painful to Mr. Martyn as it was pleasing to the careless and worldly part of his congregation. Upon the serious inconvenience, and yet more serious detriment to the spiritual interest of his flock, in being destitute of a church, he had already presented a memorial to the Governor General, and orders to provide a proper place for public worship had been issued; nothing effectual, however, was yet *done*, and Mr. Martyn's love of the souls entrusted to him not allowing him to bear the thought of their being scattered for a length of time, as sheep without a shepherd, he came to the resolution of opening his own house, as a place in which the people might assemble in this emergency. About the middle of February

he writes, 'As many of the European regiment as were effective were accommodated under my roof; and, praise be to God, we had the public ordinances once more. My text was from Isaiah iv. 'The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.' In the afternoon I waited for the women, but not one came: perhaps notice had not been given them, by some mistake. At the hospital, and with the men at night, I was engaged, as usual, in prayer: my soul panted after the living God, but it remained tied and bound with corruption. I felt as if I would have given the world to be brought to be alone with God, and the promise that this is the will of God, even our sanctification, was the right hand that upheld me while I followed after him. When low in spirits, through an unwillingness to take up the cross, I found myself more resigned by endeavouring to realise the thought that had often composed me in my trials on board the ship—that I was born to suffer: suffering is my daily appointed portion; let this reconcile me to every thing! To have a will of my own, not agreeable to God's, is a most tremendous wickedness. I own it is so for a few moments: but, Lord, write it on my heart! In perfect meekness and resignation let me take what

befals me in the path of duty, and never dare to think of being dissatisfied.'"

LETTER TO THE REV. D. CORRIE.

"January 10, 1809.—Your letter from Buxar found me in much the same spiritual state as you describe yourself to be in; though your description, no doubt, belongs more properly to me. I no longer hesitate to ascribe my stupor and formality to its right cause—unwatchfulness in worldly company. I thought that any temptation arising from the society of the people of the world, at least of such as we have had, not worthy of notice: but I find myself mistaken. The late frequent occasions of being among them have proved a snare to my corrupt heart. Instead of returning with a more elastic spring to severe duties, as I expected, my heart wants more idleness, more dissipation. David Brainerd in the wilderness—what a contrast to Henry Martyn! But God be thanked that a start now and then interrupts the slumber. I hope to be up and about my master's business; to cast off the works of darkness, and to be spiritually minded, which alone is life and peace. But what a dangerous country it is we are in; hot weather or cold, all is softness and luxury; all a conspiracy to lull us

asleep in the lap of pleasure. While we pass over this enchanted ground, call, brother, ever and anon, and ask, 'is all well?' We are shepherds keeping watch over our flocks by night: if *we* fall asleep, what is to become of them!"—

"The account of your complaint, as you may suppose, grieves me exceedingly; not because I think I shall outlive you, but because your useful labours must be reduced to one quarter, and that you may be obliged perhaps to take a voyage to Europe, which is loss of time and money. But, O brother beloved, what is life or death? Nothing to the believer in Jesus. 'He that believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.' The first and natural effect of sickness, as I have often found, is to cloud and terrify the mind. The attention of the soul is arrested by the idea of soon appearing in a new world; and a sense of guilt is felt before faith is exercised in a Redeemer; and for a time it will predominate; for the same faith that would overcome fear in health, must be considerably strengthened to have the same effect in sickness. I trust you will long live to do the work of your Lord Jesus."

Mr. Martyn having consulted his friends, the Rev. Mr. Corrie and the Rev. Mr. Brown of Calcutta, about the propriety of his going to Ara-

bia and Persia to complete the Arabic and Persian versions of the New Testament, Mr. Brown's answer is as follows:—

"But can I then (said he) bring myself to cut the string and let you go? I confess I could not, if your bodily frame was strong, and promised to last for half a century. But as you burn with the intenseness and rapid blaze of heated phosphorus, why should we not make the most of you? Your flame may last as long, and perhaps longer, in Arabia than in India. Where should the phœnix build her odoriferous nest but in the land prophetically called 'the blessed;' and where shall we ever expect, but from that country, the true comforter to come to the nations of the east? I contemplate your New Testament springing up, as it were, from dust and ashes, but beautiful as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers like yellow gold."

The following sketch of Mr. Martyn's character is contained in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Simeon from the Rev. Mr. Thomason of Calcutta:—

"This bright and lovely jewel first gratified our eyes on Saturday last. He is on his way to Arabia, where he is going in pursuit of health and knowledge. You know his genius, and what gigantic strides he takes in every thing. He has some great plan in his mind, of which I am no

competent judge, but as far as I do understand it, the object is far too grand for one short life, and much beyond his feeble, exhausted frame. Feeble it is indeed! How fallen and changed! His complaint lies in his lungs: and appears to be a beginning consumption. But let us hope the sea air may revive him, and that change of place and pursuit may do him essential service, and continue his life many years. In all other respects he is exactly the same as he was: he shines in all the dignity of love, and seems to carry about him such a heavenly majesty as impresses the mind beyond description. But if he talks much, though in a low voice, he sinks, and you are reminded of his being dust and ashes."

Mr. Martyn after this proceeded to Shiraz, where he accomplished the important and arduous work of translating the New Testament into the Persian language. In endeavouring to come from that city to Constantinople, he was seized with fever and ague. While under the pressure of disease he was barbarously hurried on by his Tartar guide, till he fell a sacrifice to the united effects of fever and excessive fatigue. The following short notices are taken from his Journal at this time, and I close these extracts with the affecting account of his early death which it contains.

" Sept. 30.—Travelled first to Ashgula, where we changed horses, and from thence to Purnugaban, where we halted for the night. I took nothing all day but tea, and was rather better, but headache and loss of appetite depressed my spirits; *yet my soul rests in him who is an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, which, though not seen, keeps me fast.*

" October 1.—After sitting a little by the fire, I was near fainting from sickness. My depression of spirits led me to the throne of grace, as a sinful abject worm. When I thought of myself and my transgressions, I could find no text so cheering as 'My ways are not as your ways.' By the men who accompanied Sir William Ousely to Constantinople, I learned that the plague was raging at Constantinople, and thousands dying every day. One of the Persians had died of it. They added, that the inhabitants of Tocat were flying from their town from the same cause. Thus I am passing inevitably into imminent danger. O Lord, thy will be done! Living or dying remember me!

" 6th.—No horses being to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard, and thought, with sweet comfort and peace, of my God; in solitude, my company, my friend, and comforter. O! when shall time give place to eternity! When shall appear that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!

There, there shall in nowise enter in any thing that defileth: none of that wickedness that has made men worse than wild beasts—none of those corruptions that add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard of any more."

"Scarcely had Mr. Martyn breathed these aspirations after that state of blissful purity, for which he had attained such a measure of meetness, when he was called to exchange a condition of pain, weakness, and suffering, for that everlasting 'rest which remaineth for the people of God.' At Tocat, on the 16th of October, 1812, either falling a sacrifice to the plague, which then raged there, or sinking under that disorder which, when he penned his last words, had so greatly reduced him, he surrendered his soul into the hands of his Redeemer."

REV. DAVID BRAINERD.

EXTRACTS from the Memoir of Henry Martyn seem most naturally accompanied with some notices from the Life of the Rev. David Brainerd, missionary among the North American Indians. Not only had Mr. Martyn a high admiration of Brainerd's character, but he seems to have chosen him as a model; and the perusal of Brainerd's Life appears to have had some influence in leading him to devote himself to missionary labours. "The immediate cause (says his biographer) of his determination to undertake the office of a Christian missionary, was hearing the Rev. Mr. Simeon remark on the benefit which had resulted from the services of a missionary (Mr. Corrie) in India: his attention was thus arrested, and his thoughts occupied with the vast importance of the subject. Soon after which, perusing the Life

of David Brainerd, who preached with apostolical zeal and success to the North American Indians, and who finished a course of self-denying labours for his Redeemer with unspeakable joy at the early age of thirty-two, his soul was filled with a holy emulation of that extraordinary man; and after deep consideration and fervent prayer he at length fixed in a resolution to follow his example." Again, in Mr. Martyn's Journal we have the following remark: "Read Brainerd. I feel my heart knit to this dear man, and really rejoice to think of meeting him in heaven."

This attachment to such a character will not be at all a matter of surprise to any one who has read the very interesting extracts from Mr. Brainerd's Diary, published by President Edwards, as well as the account written by himself of the singular success of his labours among the Indians at Crossweeksung. Mr. Martyn was just the man to appreciate the character of such a person as Mr. Brainerd at its full value. Indeed there seems to have been a very striking similarity in the spirit and cast of mind of these two eminent servants of Christ, as both were distinguished by such a constant and at the same time ardent zeal in the service of God, and such an elevated and habitual tone of devotion, as are very rarely to be met with even among those of whose sincerity in the service of the gospel we are not permitted to entertain a doubt.

In Mr. Brainerd's Diary there are comparatively few passages that bear directly on the subject of the present volume. The slightest notices, however, from so eminent a Christian, and one who was so much distinguished by success as a missionary during the short time he was permitted to act in this character, ought to be highly prized. Respecting this success, Dr. Dwight, in his Travels, makes the following remark: "The excellent Brainerd in one place converted by his preaching, so far as the human eye can judge, seventy-five Indians out of one hundred to the faith and obedience of the gospel." The following extracts are selected as the only passages that occur in the publication above mentioned, as having an immediate reference to the preaching of the gospel, or to the spirit by which those ought to be animated who are engaged in this service.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER.

"August 4.—Was enabled to pray much through the whole day, and through divine goodness found some intenseness of soul in the duty, as I used to do, and some ability to persevere in my supplications: had some apprehensions of divine things that were engaging, and that gave me some courage and resolution. It is good, I find, to persevere in attempts to pray, if I cannot pray

with perseverance, *i. e.* continue long in my addresses to the divine Being. I have generally found, that the more I do in secret prayer, the more I have delighted to do, and have enjoyed more of a spirit of prayer; and frequently have found the contrary, when with journeying, or otherwise, I have been much deprived of retirement. A seasonable steady performance of secret duties in their proper hours, and a careful improvement of all time, filling up every hour with some profitable labour, either of heart, head, or hands, are excellent means of spiritual peace and boldness before God. 'Christ,' indeed, 'is our peace, and by him we have boldness of access to God;' but a good conscience, void of offence, is an excellent preparation for an approach into the divine presence. There is difference between self-confidence and a self-righteous pleasing ourselves, (with our own duties, attainments, and spiritual enjoyments,) which godly souls sometimes are guilty of, and that holy confidence arising from the testimony of a good conscience, which good Hezekiah had, when he says, 'Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' 'Then,' says the holy psalmist, 'shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.' Filling up our time with and for God is the way to rise up and lie down in peace."

MR. BRAINERD'S GREAT DESIRE TO BE USEFUL.

"December 9.—Preached, both parts of the day, at a place called Greenwich, in New Jersey, about ten miles from my own house. In the first discourse I had scarce any warmth or affectionate longing for souls. In the intermission season I got alone among the bushes, and cried to God for pardon of my deadness; and was in anguish and bitterness that I could not address souls with more compassion and tender affection: judged and condemned myself for want of this divine temper; though I saw I could not get it as of myself, any more than I could make a world. In the latter exercise, blessed be the Lord, I had some fervency, both in prayer and preaching; and especially in the application of my discourse, was enabled to address precious souls with affection, concern, tenderness, and importunity. The Spirit of God, I think, was there; as the effects were apparent, tears running down many cheeks.

"Found my interpreter under some concern for his soul, which was some comfort to me, and yet filled me with new care. I longed greatly for his conversion; lifted up my heart to God for it, while I was talking to him; came home, and poured out my soul to God for him; enjoyed some freedom in prayer, and was enabled, I think, to leave all with God.

"April 15.—My soul longed for more spirituality; and it was my burden that I could do no more for God. Oh, my barrenness is my daily affliction and heavy load! Oh, how precious is time; and how it pains me to see it slide away, while I do so very little to any good purpose! O that God would make me more fruitful and spiritual.

"April 17.—In the evening preached from Psal. lxxiii. 28, 'But it is good for me to draw near to God.' God helped me to feel the truth of my text, both in the first prayer and in the sermon. I was enabled to pour out my soul to God with great freedom, fervency, and affection; and, blessed be the Lord, it was a comfortable season to me. I was enabled to speak with tenderness, and yet with faithfulness; and divine truths seemed to fall with weight and influence upon the hearers. My heart was melted for the dear assembly, and I loved every body in it; and scarce ever felt more love to immortal souls in my life; my soul cried, 'O that the dear creatures might be saved! O that God would have mercy on them!'

"October 12.—Oh, how precious is time! And how guilty it makes me feel, when I think I have trifled away and misimproved it, or neglected to fill up each part of it with duty to the utmost of my ability and capacity!

"November 3.—Being now in so weak and low a state, that I was utterly incapable of performing my work, and having little hope of recovery, unless by much riding, I thought it my duty to take a lengthy journey into New England, and to divert myself among my friends, whom I had not now seen for a long time. And accordingly took leave of my congregation this day. Before I left my people I visited them all in their respective houses, and discoursed to each one as I thought most proper and suitable for their circumstances, and found great freedom and assistance in so doing: I scarcely left one house but some were in tears; and many were not only affected with my being about to leave them, but with the solemn addresses I made them upon divine things; for I was helped to be fervent in spirit while I discoursed to them. When I had thus gone through my congregation, which took me most of the day, and had taken leave of them and of the school, I left home, and rode about two miles, to the house where I lived in the summer past, and there lodged. Was refreshed this evening, in that I had left my congregation so well disposed and affected, and that I had been so much assisted in making my farewell addresses to them."

The following passages contain the account given by President Edwards of

MR. BRAINERD'S STATE OF MIND IN THE NEAR PROSPECT OF DEATH.

" He told me, when near his end, that 'he never in all his life had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on earth, as since he was brought so exceeding low at Boston.' He seemed much to wonder that there appeared no more of a disposition in ministers and people to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world; that so little a part of their prayers was generally taken up about it in their families, and elsewhere; and particularly, he several times expressed his wonder that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made, in a memorial from a number of ministers in Scotland, and sent over into America, for united extraordinary prayer, among Christ's ministers and people, for the coming of Christ's kingdom: and he sent it as his dying advice to his own congregation, that they should practise it agreeably to that proposal.

" Though he was constantly exceeding weak, yet there appeared in him a continual care well to improve time, and fill it up with something that might be profitable, and in some respect for the glory of God or the good of men: either profitable

conversation, or writing letters to absent friends, or noting something in his diary, or looking over his former writings, correcting them, and preparing them to be left in the hands of others at his death, or giving some directions concerning a future conducting and management of his people, or employment in secret devotions. He seemed never to be easy, however ill, if he was not doing something for God or in his service.

" The extraordinary frame that he was in that evening (when near death) could not be hid; 'his mouth spake out of the abundance of his heart,' expressing in a very affecting manner much the same things as are written in his diary; and among very many other extraordinary expressions, which he then uttered, were such as these:—'My heaven is to please God, and glorify him, and to give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory; that is the heaven I long for; that is my religion, and that is my happiness, and always was ever since I suppose I had any true religion; and all those that are of that religion shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there; but to love, and please, and glorify God is all: had I a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God; but I have nothing to give when all is done. It is impossible for any rational creature to be

happy without acting all for God: God himself could not make him happy any other way. I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels: all my desire is to glorify God. My heart goes out to the burying place; it seems to me a desirable place: but Oh to glorify God! that is it; that is above all. It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little for God in the world: Oh! it is but a very small matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it that I have not done more for him. There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction besides living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. My greatest joy and comfort has been, to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons: and now, in my illness, while I am full of pain and distress, from day to day, all the comfort I have is in being able to do some little *char* (or small piece of work) for God, either by something that I say, or by writing, or some other way.'

"He intermingled with these and other like expressions many pathetical counsels to those that were about him, particularly to my children and servants. He applied himself to some of my younger children at this time; calling them to him, and speaking to them one by one; setting

before them, in a very plain manner, the nature and essence of true piety, and its great importance and necessity; earnestly warning them not to rest in any thing short of that true and thorough change of heart, and a life devoted to God; counselling them not to be slack in the great business of religion, nor in the least to delay it; enforcing his counsels with this, that his words were the words of a dying man: said he, 'I shall die here, and here I shall be buried, and here you will see my grave, and do you remember what I have said to you. I am going into eternity; and it is sweet to me to think of eternity; the endlessness of it makes it sweet: but Oh, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked! I cannot mention it, nor think of it; the thought is too dreadful. When you see my grave, then remember what I said to you while I was alive; then think with yourself, how that man that lies in that grave counselled and warned me to prepare for death.'

"He now, and from time to time, in this his dying state, recommended to his brother a life of self-denial, of weanedness from the world, and devotedness to God, and an earnest endeavour to obtain much of the grace of God's Spirit, and God's gracious influences on his heart; representing the great need which ministers stand in of them, and the unspeakable benefit of them from his own experience. Among many other

expressions, he said thus: 'When ministers feel these special gracious influences on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men, and as it were to handle them with hands; whereas, without them, whatever reason and oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps instead of hands.'"

SKETCH OF MR. BRAINERD'S CHARACTER, GIVEN BY PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

"I found him remarkably sociable, pleasant, and entertaining in his conversation; yet solid, savoury, spiritual, and very profitable; appearing meek, modest, and humble, far from any stiffness, moroseness, superstitious demureness, or affected singularity in speech or behaviour, and seeming to nauseate all such things. We enjoyed not only the benefit of his conversation, but had the comfort and advantage of hearing him pray in the family from time to time. His manner of praying was very agreeable; most becoming a worm of the dust, and a disciple of Christ, addressing to an infinitely great and holy God, and Father of mercies; not with florid expressions, or a studied eloquence; not with any intemperate vehemence, or indecent boldness; at the greatest distance from any appearance of ostentation, and from every thing that might look as though he

meant to recommend himself to those that were about him, or set himself off to their acceptance; free too from vain repetitions, without impertinent excursions, or needless multiplying of words. He expressed himself with the strictest propriety, with weight, and pungency; and yet what his lips uttered seemed to flow from the fulness of his heart, as deeply impressed with a great and solemn sense of our necessities, unworthiness, and dependence, and of God's infinite greatness, excellency, and sufficiency, rather than merely from a warm and fruitful brain, pouring out good expressions. And I know not that ever I heard him so much as ask a blessing or return thanks at table, but there was something remarkable to be observed both in the matter and manner of the performance. In his prayers he insisted much on the prosperity of Zion, the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the flourishing and propagation of religion among the Indians. And he generally made it one petition in his prayer, 'that we might not outlive our usefulness.'

"Is there not much in the preceding memoirs of Mr. Brainerd to teach, and excite to duty, us who are called to the work of the ministry, and all that are candidates for that great work? What a deep sense did he seem to have of the greatness and importance of that work, and with what weight did it lie on his mind! How sensi-

ble was he of his own insufficiency for this work, and how great was his dependence on God's sufficiency! How solicitous that he might be fitted for it! And to this end, how much time did he spend in prayer and fasting, as well as reading and meditation, giving himself to these things! How did he dedicate his whole life, all his powers and talents to God; and forsake and renounce the world, with all its pleasing and ensnaring enjoyments, that he might be wholly at liberty to serve Christ in this work; and to 'please him who had chosen him to be a soldier, under the Captain of our salvation!' With what solicitude, solemnity, and diligence did he devote himself to God our Saviour, and seek his presence and blessing in secret, at the time of his ordination! And how did his whole heart appear to be constantly engaged, his whole time employed, and his whole strength spent in the business he then solemnly undertook and was publicly set apart to! And his history shows us the right way to success in the work of the ministry. He sought it, as a resolute soldier seeks victory in a siege or battle, or as a man that runs a race for a great prize. Animated with love to Christ and souls, how did he 'labour always fervently,' not only in word and doctrine, in public and private, but in prayers day and night, 'wrestling with God' in secret, and 'travailing in birth,' with unutterable groans and agonies, 'until Christ were formed' in the

hearts of the people to whom he was sent! How did he thirst for a blessing on his ministry; and 'watch for souls as one that must give an account!' How did he 'go forth in the strength of the Lord God;' seeking and depending on a special influence of the Spirit to assist and succeed him! And what was the happy fruit at last, though after long waiting, and many dark and discouraging appearances! Like a true son of Jacob, he persevered in wrestling, through all the darkness of the night, until the breaking of the day.

"And his example of labouring, praying, denying himself, and enduring hardness, with unfainting resolution and patience, and his faithful, vigilant, and prudent conduct in many other respects, (which it would be too long now particularly to recite,) may afford instruction to missionaries in particular."

Letter to a young gentleman, a candidate for the ministry, for whom Mr. Brainerd had a special friendship, written at the time of his great illness, and apparent nearness to death, while in Boston.

"Very dear Sir,—How amazing it is that the living, who know they must die, should, notwithstanding, 'put far away the evil day,' in a season of health and prosperity; and live at such an aw-

ful distance from a familiarity with the grave, and the great concerns beyond it! And especially it may justly fill us with surprise, that any whose minds have been divinely enlightened, to behold the important things of eternity as they are, I say, that such should live in this manner. And yet, Sir, how frequently is this the case? How rare are the instances of those who live and act, from day to day, as on the verge of eternity; striving to fill up all their remaining moments in the service, and to the honour of their great Master? We insensibly trifle away time, while we seem to have enough of it; and are so strangely amused, as in a great measure to lose a sense of the holiness and blessed qualifications necessary to prepare us to be inhabitants of the heavenly paradise. But Oh, dear Sir, a dying bed, if we enjoy our reason clearly, will give another view of things. I have now, for more than three weeks, lain under the greatest degree of weakness; the greater part of the time expecting daily and hourly to enter into the eternal world: sometimes have been so far gone, as to be wholly speechless for some hours together. And Oh, of what vast importance has a holy spiritual life appeared to me to be in this season! I have longed to call upon all my friends to make it their business to live to God; and especially all that are designed for, or engaged in the service of the sanctuary. O, dear Sir, do not think it enough, to live at the

rate of common Christians. Alas, to how little purpose do they often converse, when they meet together! The visits, even of those who are called Christians indeed, are frequently extreme barren; and conscience cannot but condemn us for the misimprovement of time, while we have been conversant with them. But the way to enjoy the divine presence, and be fitted for distinguishing service for God, is to live a life of great devotion and constant self-dedication to him; observing the motions and dispositions of our own hearts, whence we may learn the corruptions that lodge there, and our constant need of help from God for the performance of the least duty. And Oh, dear Sir, let me beseech you frequently to attend the great and precious duties of secret fasting and prayer.

"Suffer me, therefore, finally, to intreat you earnestly to 'give yourself to prayer, to reading, and meditation' on divine truths; strive to penetrate to the bottom of them, and never be content with a superficial knowledge. By this means, your thoughts will gradually grow weighty and judicious; and you hereby will be possessed of a valuable treasure, out of which you may produce 'things new and old,' to the glory of God."

The last extract I insert is from a letter addressed to his brother John, written when he was

on the brink of the grave, and the summer before his death.

"And now, my dear brother, as I must press you to pursue after personal holiness, to be as much in fasting and prayer as your health will allow, and to live above the rate of common Christians; so I must intreat you solemnly to attend to your public work: labour to distinguish between true and false religion: and to that end, watch the motions of God's Spirit upon your own heart; look to him for help; and impartially compare your experiences with his word. Read Mr. Edwards on the affections, where the essence and soul of religion is clearly distinguished from false affections.

"Charge my people in the name of their dying minister, yea, in the name of him who was dead and is alive, to live and walk as becomes the gospel. Tell them how great the expectations of God and his people are from them, and how awfully they will wound God's cause, if they fall into vice; as well as fatally prejudice other poor Indians. Always insist that their experiences are rotten, that their joys are delusive, although they may have been rapt up into the third heavens in their own conceit by them, unless the main tenour of their lives be spiritual, watchful, and holy. In pressing these things, 'thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee.'"

REV. RICHARD CECIL.

In that very interesting book entitled "Remains of the late Rev. Richard Cecil," and containing many striking, judicious, and original remarks on various subjects, there is a considerable portion devoted to observations on the Christian ministry. The following extracts then cannot fail to be read with interest and advantage, as expressing the result of the matured observation and experience of this valuable and useful minister of Christ.

ON A MINISTER'S QUALIFYING HIMSELF FOR HIS OFFICE.

"When a young minister sets out, he should sit down and ask himself how he may best qualify himself for his office.

"How does a physician qualify himself? It is not enough that he offers to feel the pulse. He

must read, and inquire, and observe, and make experiments, and correct himself again and again. He must lay in a stock of medical knowledge before he begins to feel the pulse.

"The minister is a physician of a far higher order. He has a vast field before him. He has to study an infinite variety of constitutions. He is to furnish himself with the knowledge of the whole system of remedies. He is to be a man of skill and expedient. If one thing fail, he must know how to apply another. Many intricate and perplexed cases will come before him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared for such. His patients will put many questions to him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared to answer them. He is a merchant embarking in extensive concerns. A little ready money in the pocket will not answer the demands that will be made upon him. Some of us seem to think it will, but they are grossly deceived. There must be a well-furnished account at the banker's.

"But it is not all gold that glitters. A young minister must learn to separate and select his materials. A man who talks to himself will find out what suits the heart of man: some things respond: they ring again. Nothing of this nature is lost on mankind: it is worth its weight in gold, for the service of a minister. He must remark, too, what it is that puzzles and distracts the mind: all this is to be avoided: it may wear the garb of

deep research, and great acumen, and extensive learning; but it is nothing to the mass of mankind.

" One of the most important considerations in making a sermon, is to disembarrass it as much as possible. The sermons of the last century were like their large unwieldy chairs. Men have now a far more true idea of a chair. They consider it as a piece of furniture to sit upon, and they cut away from it every thing that embarrasses and encumbers it. It requires as much reflection and wisdom to know what is not to be put into a sermon as what is.

" He should become a philosopher also. He should make experiments on himself and others, in order to find out what will produce effect. He is a fisherman; and the fisherman must fit himself to his employment. If some fish will bite only by day, he must fish by day: if others will bite only by moon-light, he must fish for them by moon-light. He has an engine to work, and it must be his most assiduous endeavour to work his engine to the full extent of its powers: and, to find out its powers, is the first step toward success and effect.

" But all the minister's efforts will be vanity, or worse than vanity, if he have not unction. Unction must come down from heaven, and spread a savour, and relish, and feeling over his ministry. And, among all the other means of

qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to *the word of God and prayer.*"

ON THE ASSISTANCE WHICH A MINISTER HAS REASON TO EXPECT IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS PUBLIC DUTY.

"Some men set up exorbitant notions about accuracy. But exquisite accuracy is totally lost on mankind. The greater part of those who hear, cannot be brought to see the points of the accurate man. The scriptures are not written in this manner. I should advise a young minister to break through all such cobwebs as these unphilosophical men would spin round him. An humble and modest man is silenced, if he sees one of these critics before him. He should say, 'I am God's servant. To my own master I stand or fall. I will labour according to the utmost ability which God giveth, and leave all consequences to him.'

"We are especially taught in the New Testament to glorify the Spirit of God: and, in his gracious operations in our ministry, we are nearer the apostolic times than we often think ourselves.

"But this assistance is to be expected by us, as labourers in the vineyard; not as rhapsodists. Idle men may be pointed out, who have abused

the doctrine of divine assistance; but what has not been abused? We must expect a special blessing to accompany the truth: not to supersede labour, but to rest on and accompany labour.

"A minister is to be *in season, and out of season;* and, therefore, everywhere a minister. He will not employ himself in writing secular histories; he will not busy himself in prosecuting mathematical inquries. He will labour directly in his high calling; and indirectly, in a vast variety of ways, as he may be enabled: and God may bless that word in private, which may have been long heard in public in vain.

"A minister should satisfy himself in saying, 'It matters not what men think of my talents. Am I doing what I can?'—for there is great encouragement in that commendation of our Lord's, *She hath done what she could.*

"I have been cured of expecting the Holy Spirit's influence without due preparation on our part, by observing how men preach who take up that error. I have heard such men talk nonsense by the hour.

"We must combine Luther with St. Paul—'*Benè orasse est benè studuisse,*' must be united with St. Paul's '*Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*' One errs who says, 'I will preach a reputable sermon;' and another errs who says, 'I will leave

all to the assistance of the Holy Spirit,' while he has neglected a diligent preparation."

ON PREACHING CHRIST.

"Christ is God's great ordinance. Nothing ever has been done, nor will be done to purpose, but so far as he is held forth with simplicity. All the lines must centre in him. I feel this in my own experience, and therefore I govern my ministry by it: but then this is to be done *according to the analogy of faith*—not ignorantly, absurdly, and falsely. I doubt not, indeed, but that excess on this side is less pernicious than excess on the other; because God will bless his own especial ordinance, though partially understood, and partially exhibited.

"There are many weighty reasons for rendering Christ prominent in our ministry:—

"Christ cheers the prospect.—Every thing connected with him has light and gladness thrown round it. I look out of my window: the scene is scowling—dark—frigid—forbidding: I shudder—my heart is chilled. But let the sun break forth from the cloud—I can feel—I can act—I can spring.

"God descending and dwelling with man, is a truth so infinitely grand, that it must absorb all

others. 'You are his attendants! Well! But the King! There he is!—the King!'

"Out of Christ God is not intelligible, much less amiable.

"God puts peculiar honour on the preaching of Christ crucified. A philosopher may philosophize his hearers, but the preaching of Christ must convert them. John the Baptist will make his hearers tremble; but if the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, let him exhibit that peculiar feature of his superiority—Jesus Christ. Men may preach Christ ignorantly—blunderingly—absurdly: yet God will give it efficacy, because he is determined to magnify his own ordinance.

"Too much dependence is often placed on a system of rational contrivance. An ingenious man thinks he can so manage to preach Christ, that his hearers will say, 'Here is nothing of methodism! This has nothing to do with that system!' I will venture to say, if this is the sentiment communicated by his ministry, that he has not delivered his message. The people do not know what he means, or he has kept back part of God's truth. He has fallen on a carnal contrivance to avoid a cross; and he does no good to souls. The whole message must be delivered; and it is better it should be delivered even coarsely, than not at all. We may lay it down as a principle, that if the gospel be a medicine, and a

specific too—as it is—it must be got down such as it is. Any attempt to sophisticate and adulterate will deprive it of its efficacy; and will often recoil on the man who makes the attempt, to his shame and confusion. The Jesuits tried to render Christianity palatable to the Chinese by adulterating it, but the Jesuits were driven with abhorrence from the empire.

"We must be cautious too, since men of God have been and ever will be the butt and scorn of the world, of thinking that we can escape its sneers and censures. It is a foolish project to avoid giving offence; but it is our duty to avoid giving unnecessary offence. It is necessary offence, if it is given by the truth; but it is unnecessary, if our own spirit occasion it.

"The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a wonderful mystery. Some men think they preach Christ gloriously, because they name him every two minutes in their sermons. But that is not preaching Christ. To understand, and enter into, and open his various offices and characters—the glories of his person and work—his relation to us, and ours to him, and to God the Father and God the Spirit through him—this is the knowledge of Christ. The divines of the present day are stunted dwarfs in this knowledge, compared with the great men of the last age. To know Jesus Christ for ourselves, is to make him a consolation, de-

light, strength, righteousness, companion, and end.

"Let there be no extremes: yet I am arrived at this conviction:—Men who lean toward the extreme of evangelical privileges in their ministry, do much more to the conversion of their hearers, than they do, who lean toward the extreme of requirement. And my own experience confirms my observation. I feel myself repelled, if any thing chills, loads, or urges me. This is my nature, and I see it to be very much the nature of other men. But let me hear, *Son of man, thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord*—I am melted and subdued."

ON A MINISTER'S FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE WITH HIS HEARERS.

"It is a snare to a minister when in company, to be drawn out to converse largely on the state of the funds, and on the news of the day. He should know the world, and what is doing in the world, and should give things of this nature their due place and proportion; but if he can be drawn out to give twenty opinions on this or that subject of politics or literature, he is lowered in his tone. A man of sense feels something violent in

the transition from such conversation to the Bible and to prayer.

" Dinner visits can seldom be rendered really profitable to the mind. The company are so much occupied, that little good is to be done. A minister should show his sense of the value of time; it is a sad thing when those around him begin to yawn. He must be a man of business. It is not sufficiently considered how great the sin of idleness is. We talk in the pulpit of the value of time, but we act too little on what we say."

ON A MINISTER ENCOURAGING ANIMADVERSIONS ON HIMSELF.

" It is a serious inquiry for a minister, how far he should encourage animadversion on himself in his hearers. He will encounter many ignorant and many censorious remarks, but he may gain much on the whole.

He should lay down to himself a few principles.

It is *better that a minister smart than mistake.* It is better that a traveller meet a surly, impertinent fellow to direct him his way, than lose his way. A minister is so important in his office, that,

whatever others think of it, he should regard this and this only as the transaction for eternity.

" A minister must lay it down also as a principle, that *he will never sufficiently understand his own pride and self-love; and that confidence in his own sense, which cleaves closely to every man.* He must consider this as the general malady.

" A minister should consider *how much more easily a weak man can read a wise man, than a wise man can read himself;* and that for this reason, no man can see and hear himself. He is too much formed in his own habits, his family notions, his closet notions, to detect himself. When Apelles took his stand behind his picture, he was a wise man; and he was a wise man too, when he altered the shoe on the hint of the cobler; the cobler, in his place, was to be heard.

" A minister should consider, too, that *few will venture to speak to a public man.* It is a rare thing to hear a man say,—' Upon my word that thing, or your general manner, is defective or improper.' If a wise man says this, he shows a regard, which the united stock of five hundred flatterers will not equal. I would set down half the blunders of ministers to their not listening to animadversion.

" Let him consider, moreover, that *this aversion from reproof is not wise.* This is a symptom of the disease. Why should he want this hushing-up of the disorder? This is a mark of a little

mind. A great man can afford to lose; a little insignificant fellow is afraid of being snuffed out.

"A minister should remember that he is not always to act and speak authoritatively. He sits on his friend's chair, and his friend says his things to him with frankness. They may want, perhaps, a little decorum; but he should receive them in the most friendly and good-humoured way in the world. A thing strikes this man and that man: he may depend on it that it has some foundation.

"The minister must have decided superiority and authority, or he will want one of the principal qualities of his ministry. This is not inconsistent with receiving hints. He may mistake in some things; but he should mark the complexion of his congregation in deciding how far they are to be heard on his mistakes. If the people are heady, forward, confident in their own sense, they are never to be encouraged. They are gone too far."

ON THE MEANS OF PROMOTING A SPIRIT OF DEVOTION IN CONGREGATIONS.

"Monotony must be, above all things, avoided. The mind is vagrant; monotony cannot recal it. There may be continued vehemence, while the

attention is not excited; it is disturbance and noise; there is nothing to lead the mind into a useful train of thought or feeling.

"There is an opposite error to vehemence. Men of sense and literature depress devotion by treating things abstractedly. Simplicity, with good sense, is of unspeakable value. Religion must not be rendered abstract and curious. If a curious remark presents itself, reserve it for another place. The hearer gets away from the bustle and business of the week; he comes trembling under his fears; he would mount upward in his spirit; but a curious, etymological disquisition chills and repels him.

"In truth, we should be men of business in our congregations. We should endeavour both to excite and instruct our hearers. We should render the service an interesting affair in all its parts. We should rouse men; we should *bind up the broken-hearted;* we should *comfort the feeble-minded;* we should *support the weak;* we should *become all things to all men, if by any means we may save some.*"

ON VISITING DEATH-BEDS.

——"We have to deal with a worse death-bed character than with the man who opposes the truth. Some men assent to every thing which

we propose. They will even anticipate us. And yet we see that they mean nothing. I have often felt when with such persons—'I would they could be brought to contradict and oppose! That would lead to discussion. God might, peradventure, dash the stony heart in pieces. But this heart is like water. The impression dies as fast as it is made.' I have sought for such views as might rouse and stir up opposition. I have tried to irritate the torpid mind. But all in vain. I once visited a young clergyman of this character, who was seized with a dangerous illness at a coffee-house in town, whither some business had brought him: the first time I saw him, we conversed very closely together; and, in the prospect of death, he seemed solicitous to prepare for it. But I could make no sort of impression upon him; all I could possibly say met his entire approbation, though I saw his heart felt no interest in it. When I visited him a second time, the fear of death was gone, and, with it, all solicitude about religion. He was still civil and grateful, but he tried to parry off the business on which he knew I came. 'I will show you, Sir, some little things with which I have worn away the hours of my confinement and solitude.' He brought out a quantity of pretty and tasty drawings. I was at a loss how to express, with suitable force and delicacy, the high sense I felt of his indecorum and insipidity, and to leave a deep

impression on his conscience—I rose, however, instantly—said my time was expired—wished him well, and withdrew.

" Sometimes we have a painful part to act with sincere men, who have been carried too much into the world. I was called in to visit such a man. 'I find no comfort,' he said. 'God veils his face from me. Every thing round me is dark and uncertain.' I did not dare to act the flatterer. I said—'Let us look faithfully into the state of things. I should have been surprised if you had not felt thus. I believe you to be sincere. Your state of feelings evinces your sincerity. Had I found you exulting in God, I should have concluded that you were either deceived or a deceiver; for, while God acts in his usual order, how could you expect to feel otherwise on the approach of death, than you do feel? You have driven hard after the world. Your spirit has been absorbed in its cares. Your sentiment—your conversation, have been in the spirit of the world. And have you any reason to expect the response of conscience, and the clear evidence, which await the man who has walked and lived in close friendship with God? You know that what I say is true.' His wife interrupted me, by assuring me that he had been an excellent man. 'Silence!' said the dying penitent, 'it is all true!'"

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

" Christianity is so great and surprising in its nature, that, in preaching it to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation. It is no difficult thing to change a man's opinions. It is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions. It is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate man to passionate zeal for some religious party. But, to bring a man to love God, to love the law of God, while it condemns him, to loath himself before God, to tread the earth under his feet, to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done; and bids me go forth and preach, that by me, as his instrument, he may effect these great ends; and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry, perhaps, with a man, because he will not let me convert him: in spite of all I can say, he will still love the world."

" St. Paul admonishes Timothy to *endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.* It sometimes falls to the lot of a minister to endure the hard labour of a nurse, in a greater measure than that of a soldier. He has to encounter the

difficulties of a peculiar situation; he is the parent of a family of children, of various tempers, manners, habits, and prejudices; if he does not continually mortify himself, he will bear hardly upon some of his children. He has, however, to endure the hardness of calling his child—his friend—to an account; of being thought a severe, jealous, legal man. If a man will let matters take their chance, he may live smoothly and quietly enough; but if he will stir among the servants, and sift things to the bottom, he must bear the consequences. He must account himself *a man of strife.* His language must be, 'It is not enough that you feed me, or fill my pocket, there is something between me and thee.' The most tender and delicate of his flock have their failings. His warmest and most zealous supporters break down somewhere. A sun-shiny day breeds most reptiles. It is not enough, therefore, that the sun shines out in his church. It is not enough that numbers shout applause."

"A minister must *keep under his body, and bring it into subjection.* A Newmarket-groom will sweat himself thin, that he may be fit for his office; *now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible!*"

"It is a most important point of duty, in a minister, *to redeem time.* A young minister has sometimes called an old one out of his study, only to ask him how he did: there is a tone to be

observed towards such an idler; an intimation may be given, which he will understand, 'This is not the house!'"

"Owen remarks, that it is not sufficiently considered how much a minister's personal religion is exposed to danger, from the very circumstance of religion being his profession and employment. He must go through the acts of religion; he must put on the appearances of religion; he must utter the language and display the feelings of religion. It requires double diligence and vigilance, to maintain, under such circumstances, the spirit of religion. I have prayed; I have talked; I have preached; but now I should perish after all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others."*

"A minister must *cultivate a tender spirit.* If he does this so as to carry a savour and unction

* It is not very manifest what part of Dr. Owen's writings Mr. Cecil had in his eye here. But there is one passage to which it is not improbable he may refer, where the Doctor's language is so striking, and so much calculated to rouse to the greatest vigilance that it deserves to be quoted at length.—"He that would go down to the pit in peace, let him keep up duties in his family and closet; let him hear as often as he can have opportunity; let him speak often of good things; let him leave the company of profane and ignorant men, until he have obtained a great repute for religion; let him preach and labour to make others better than he is himself; and in the mean time NEGLECT TO HUMBLE HIS HEART AND TO WALK WITH GOD IN A MANIFEST HOLINESS AND USEFULNESS, and he will not fail of his end."—*Dr. Owen's Sermons and Tracts, p. 47. London, 1721, folio.* EDITOR.

into his work, he will have far more weight than other men. This is the result of a devotional habit. To affect feeling is nauseous and soon detected; but to feel, is the readiest way to the hearts of others."

"The leading defect in Christian ministers is want of a *devotional habit.* The Church of Rome made much of this habit. The contests accompanying and following the Reformation, with something of an indiscriminate enmity against some of the good of that Church as well as the evil, combined to repress this spirit in the Protestant writings; whereas the *mind of Christ* seems, in fact, to be the grand end of Christianity in its operation upon man."

"There is a manifest want of spiritual influence on the ministry of the present day. I feel it in my own case, and I see it in that of others. I am afraid that there is too much of a low, managing, contriving, manœuvring temper of mind among us. We are laying ourselves out, more than is expedient, to meet one man's taste, and another man's prejudices. The ministry is a grand and holy affair; and it should find in us a simple habit of spirit, and a holy but humble indifference to all consequences."

"Several things are required to enable a minister to attain a proper variety in his manner. He must be in continual practice: if I were to preach but once a month, I should lose the abili-

ty of preaching. He must know that his hearers are attached to him—that they will grant him indulgencies and liberties. He must, in some measure, feel himself above his congregation. The presence of a certain brother chills me; because I feel that I can talk on no one subject in the pulpit, with which he is not far better acquainted than I am."

"The first duty of a minister is, to call on his hearers to *turn to the Lord.* 'We have much to speak to you upon. We have many duties to urge on you. We have much instruction to give you—but all will be thrown away, till you have *turned to the Lord.*' Let me illustrate this by a familiar comparison. You see your child sinking in the water; his education lies near your heart; you are anxious to train him up so, that he may occupy well the post assigned to him in life. But, when you see him drowning, the first thoughts are, not how you may educate him, but how you may save him. Restore him to life, and then call that life into action."

"That a minister may learn how to *magnify his office,* let him study the character, the spirit, and the history of St. Paul. His life and death were one magnifying of his office: mark his object—to win souls!—to execute the will of God! As the man rises in his own esteem, his office sinks; but, as the office rises in his view, the man falls. He must be in constant hostility with him-

self, if he would magnify his office. He must hold himself in readiness to make sacrifices, when called to do so; he will not barter his office like Balaam, but will refuse to sell his service like Micaiah. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, he will refuse to come down from the great work which he has to do. He may be calumniated, but he will avoid hasty vindications of his character: it does not appear that Elisha sent after Naaman to vindicate himself from the falsehoods of Gehazi: there appears to me much true dignity in this conduct; I fear I should have wanted patience to act thus."

"The grand aim of a minister must be the exhibition of gospel truth. Statesmen may make the greatest blunders in the world, but that is not his affair. Like a king's messenger, he must not stop to take care of a person fallen down; if he can render any kindness consistently with his duty, he will do it; if not, he will prefer his office."

"Our method of preaching is not that by which Christianity was propagated; yet the genius of Christianity is not changed. There was nothing in the primitive method set or formal. The primitive bishop stood up, and read the gospel, or some other portion of scripture, and pressed on the hearers, with great earnestness and affection, a few plain and forcible truths evidently resulting from that portion of the divine word: we

take a text and make an oration. Edification was then the object of both speaker and hearers; and, while this continues to be the object, no better method can be found. A parable, or history, or passage of scripture, thus illustrated and enforced, is the best method of introducing truth to any people who are ignorant of it, and of setting it home with power on those who know it; and not formal, doctrinal, argumentative discourses. Truth and sympathy are the soul of an efficacious ministry."

"More faith and more grace would make us better preachers, for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Chrysostom's was the right method. Leighton's Lectures on Peter approach very near to this method."

"Some Christian ministers fail in their effect on their hearers by not entering as philosophers into the state of human nature. They do not consider how low the patient is reduced—that he is to be treated more as a child—that he is to have *milk* administered to him, instead of *strong meat.* They set themselves to plant principles and prove points, when they should labour to interest the heart. But, after all, men will carry their natural character into their ministry. If a man has a dry, logical, scholastic turn of mind, we shall rarely find him an interesting preacher. One in a thousand may meet him, but not more."

" What man on earth is so pernicious a drone as an idle clergyman!—a man, engaged in the most serious profession in the world; who rises to eat, and drink, and lounge, and trifle, and goes to bed; and then rises again to do the same! Our office is the most laborious in the world. The mind must be always on the stretch, to acquire wisdom and grace, and to communicate them to all who come near. It is well, indeed, when a clergyman of genius and learning devotes himself to the publication of classics and works of literature, if he cannot be prevailed on to turn his genius and learning to a more important end. Enter into this kind of society—what do you hear?—' Have you seen the new edition of Sophocles?'—' No! is a new edition of Sophocles undertaken!'——and this makes up the conversation, and these are the ends, of men who, by profession, should win souls! I received a most useful hint from Dr. Bacon, then Father of the University, when I was at College. I used frequently to visit him at his living, near Oxford; he would say to me, ' What are you doing? What are your studies?'—' I am reading so and so.'—' You are quite wrong. When I was young I could turn any piece of Hebrew into Greek verse with ease. But, when I came into this parish, and had to teach ignorant people, I was wholly at a loss—I had no furniture. They thought me a great man, but that was their igno-

rance, for I knew as little as they did of what it was most important to them to know. Study chiefly what you can turn to good account in your future life.' "

" A sermon that has more head infused into it than heart, will not come home with efficacy to the hearers. ' You must do so and so; such and such consequences will follow if you do not; such and such advantages will result from doing it:'—this is cold, dead, and spiritless, when it stands alone, or even when it is most prominent. Let the preacher's head be stored with wisdom; but above all, let his heart so feel his subject, that he may infuse life and interest into it, by speaking like one who actually possesses and feels what he says."

" Faith is the master-spring of a minister. ' Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies—Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss—he sends me to proclaim his ability and his love: I want no fourth idea!—every fourth idea is contemptible!—every fourth idea is a grand impertinence.' "

" The meanness of the earthen vessel, which conveys to others the gospel treasure, takes nothing from the value of the treasure. A dying hand may sign a deed of gift of incalculable value. A shepherd's boy may point out the way to a philosopher. A beggar may be the bearer of an invaluable present."

"A writer of sermons has often no idea how many words he uses, to which the common people affix either no meaning, or a false one. He speaks, perhaps, of 'relation to God,' but the people, who hear him, affix no other idea to the word than that of father, or brother, or relative. The preacher must converse with the people, that he may acquire their words and phrases."

"Injudicious preaching increases the offence of the cross. Strange interpretations of Scripture—ludicrous comparisons—silly stories—talking without thinking:—these are occasions of enmity."

"The loose and indiscreet conduct of professing Christians, particularly of ministers, is another occasion. The world looks at ministers out of the pulpit, to know what they mean when in it."

The following Hints are suggested under the title of,

SOME NEGATIVE RULES GIVEN TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

See that you do not hinder your success,

I. BY UNNECESSARILY APPEARING IN DANGEROUS OR IMPROPER SITUATIONS.

"It is one thing to be humble and condescending: it is another to render yourself common, cheap, and contemptible. The men of the world know when a Minister is out of his place—when

they can oppress him by numbers or circumstances—when they can make him laugh, while his office frowns. Well will it be for him, if he is only rendered ABSURD in his future public admonitions, by his former compliances; well if, being found like St. Peter on dangerous ground, he is not seduced, virtually at least, to deny his Master."

II. BY SUSPICIOUS APPEARANCES IN YOUR FAMILY.

"As the head of your household, you are responsible for its appearances. Its pride, sloth, and disorder will be yours. You are accountable for your wife's conduct, dress, and manners; as well as those of your children, whose education must be peculiarly exemplary. Your family is to be a picture of what you wish other families to be; and, without the most determined resolution, in reliance on God, to finish this picture, COST WHAT IT WILL, your recommending family religion to others will but create a smile. Your unfriendly hearers will recollect enough of Scripture to tell you, that you ought, like the primitive bishop, to be 'one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?'"

III. BY MEDDLING, BEYOND YOUR SPHERE, IN TEMPORALS.

"Your aim and conversation, like your sacred call, are to be altogether heavenly. As a man of God, you have no concern with politics, and parties and schemes of interest, but you are to live above them. There is a sublime spirit in a devoted Minister, which, as one says of Christianity itself, pays no more regard to these things than to the battles of rooks, the industry of ants, or the policy of bees."

IV. BY VENTURING OFF GENERAL AND ACKNOWLEDGED GROUND IN SPIRITUALS.

"By giving strong meat, instead of milk, to those who are yet but babes—by giving heed to fables, which minister questions rather than godly edifying; amusing the mind, but not affecting the heart; often disturbing and bewildering, seldom convincing; frequently raising a smile, never drawing a tear."

V. BY MAINTAINING ACKNOWLEDGED TRUTH IN YOUR OWN SPIRIT.

"Both food and medicines are injurious, if administered scalding hot. The spirit of a teacher often effects more than his matter. Benevolence is a universal language: and it will apologize for a multitude of defects, in the man who speaks it; while neither talents nor truth will apologize for pride, illiberality, or bitterness. Avoid, there-

fore, irritating occasions and persons, particularly disputes and disputants, by which a minister often loses his temper and his character."

VI. BY BEING TOO SHARP-SIGHTED, TOO QUICK-EARED, OR TOO READY-TONGUED.

"Some evils are irremediable: they are best neither seen nor heard: by SEEING and HEARING things which you cannot remove, you will create implacable adversaries; who, being guilty aggressors, never forgive. Avoid SPEAKING meanly or harshly of any one: not only because this is forbidden to Christians, but because it is to declare war as by a thousand heralds."

VII. BY THE TEMPTATIONS ARISING FROM THE FEMALE SEX.

"I need not mention what havoc Satan has made in the church by this means, from the fall to this day. Your safety, when in danger from this quarter, lies in flight—to parley is to fall. Take the first hint from conscience, or from friends.

"In fine, watch thou in all things: endure afflictions: do the work of an evangelist: make full proof of thy ministry: and then, whether those around you acknowledge your real character or not now, they shall one day know that there hath been a prophet among them!"

REV. ROBERT HALL.

The following extracts are taken from one of the few sermons that have been given to the public by the Rev. Robert Hall, of Leicester. When we reflect on the deep interest with which his printed discourses have been read by a very numerous class of all denominations of Christians, and the powerful hold he has thus got of the public mind, it cannot but be a matter of serious regret that one who is so well qualified to excite, to instruct, and to edify, has not more extensively employed those eminent talents for general usefulness with which he has been endowed. May we not entertain the hope, that before he close his career on earth, he will be persuaded to listen to the request of his numerous friends, to leave some additional memorials of his labours to those who shall survive him?

The discourse from which the following passages are selected is entitled, "On the Discourage-

ments and Supports of the Christian Minister." It was delivered to the Rev. James Robertson, at his ordination over the Independent Church, at Stretton, Warwickshire. The text is 2 Cor. iv. 1. "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

DIFFICULTIES OF THE MINISTRY.

"To arrest the attention of the careless, to subdue the pride, and soften the obduracy of the human heart, so that it shall stoop to the authority of an unseen Saviour, is a task which surpasses the utmost efforts of human ability, unaided by a superior power. In attempting to realize the design of the Christian ministry, we are proposing to call the attention of men from the things which are seen and temporal, to things unseen and eternal; to conduct them from a life of sense to a life of faith; to subdue, or weaken at least, the influence of a world, which, being always present, is incessantly appealing to the senses, and soliciting the heart, in favour of a state, whose very existence is ascertained only by testimony. We call upon them to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, to deny the strongest and most inveterate propensities, and to renounce the enjoyments

which they have tasted and felt, for the sake of a happiness to which they have no relish. We must charge *them*, as they value their salvation, not to love the world, who have been accustomed to make it the sole object of their attachment, and to return to their allegiance to that almighty and invisible Ruler, from whom they have deeply revolted. We present to them, it is true, 'a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined;' we invite them to entertainments more ample and exquisite than, but for the gospel, it had entered into the heart of man to conceive; but we address our invitations to minds fatally indisposed, alienated from the life of God, with little sense of the value of his favour, and no delight in his converse. The souls we address, though originally formed for these enjoyments, and utterly incapable of being happy without them, have lost, through the fall, that right taste and apprehension of things, which is requisite for the due appreciation of these blessings, and, like Ezekiel, we prophecy to dry bones in the valley of vision, which will never live but under the visitation of that breath which bloweth where it listeth. This indisposition to the things of God, so radical and incurable by human power, as it has been a frequent source of discouragement to the faithful minister, so it would prove an invincible obstacle to success, did that success depend upon human agency.

"To these difficulties, which arise from the nature of the work, abstractedly considered, must be added, those which are modified by a variety of circumstances, and which result from that diversity of temper, character and situation, which prevails in our auditory. To the several classes of which it consists, it is necessary 'rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion of meat in due season.' The epidemic malady of our nature assumes so many shapes, and appears under such a variety of symptoms, that these may be considered as so many distinct diseases, which demand a proportionate variety in the method of treatment; nor will the same prescription suit all cases. A different set of truths, a different mode of address, is requisite to rouse the careless, to beat down the arrogance of a self-justifying spirit, from what is necessary to comfort the humble and contrite in heart; nor is it easy to say which we should most anxiously guard against—the infusion of a false peace, or inflaming the wounds which we ought to heal. A loose and indiscriminate manner of applying the promises and threatenings of the gospel is ill-judged and pernicious; it is not possible to conceive a more effectual method of depriving the sword of the Spirit of its edge, than adopting that lax generality of representation, which leaves its hearer nothing to apply, presents no

incentive to self-examination, and, besides its utter inefficiency, disgusts by the ignorance of human nature, or the disregard to its best interests it infallibly betrays. Without descending to such a minute specification of circumstances, as shall make our addresses personal, they ought unquestionably to be characteristic, that the conscience of the audience may feel the hand of the preacher searching it, and every individual know where to class himself. The preacher who aims at doing good, will endeavour above all things, to insulate his hearers, to place each of them apart, and render it impossible for him to escape by losing himself in the crowd. At the day of judgment, the attention excited by the surrounding scene, the strange aspect of nature, the dissolution of the elements, and the last trump, will have no other effect than to cause the reflections of the sinner to return with a more overwhelming tide on his own character, his sentence, his unchanging destiny; and, amid the innumerable millions who surround him, he will *mourn apart.* It is thus the Christian minister should endeavour to prepare the tribunal of conscience, and turn the eyes of every one of his hearers on himself.

" To men of different casts and complexions, it is obvious, a corresponding difference in the selection of topics, and the method of appeal, is requisite. Some are only capable of digesting the first principles of religion, on whom it is ne-

cessary often to inculcate the same lessons with the reiteration of parental solicitude: there are others of a wider grasp of comprehension, who must be indulged with an ampler variety, and to whom views of religion less obvious, less obtrusive, and demanding a more vigorous exercise of the understanding, are peculiarly adapted. Some are accustomed to contemplate every subject in a light so cool and argumentative, that they are not easily impressed with any thing which is not presented in the garb of reasoning; nor apt, though firm believers in revelation, to be strongly moved by naked assertions even from that quarter. There are others of a softer temperament, who are more easily won by tender strokes of pathos. Minds of an obdurate make, and which have been rendered callous by long habits of vice, must be appalled and subdued by the terrors of the Lord; while others are capable of being 'drawn with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. Some we must save with fear, plucking them out of the fire; on others we must have compassion, making a difference.' You will recollect that He who spake as never man spake, mild, gentle, insinuating in his addresses to the multitude, reserved the thunder of his denunciations for sanctimonious hypocrites. In this part of our ministerial function, we shall do well to imitate St. Paul, who became all things to all men, that he might win some; combining,

in his efforts for the salvation of souls, the utmost simplicity of intention, with the utmost versatility of address.

"May I be permitted to remark, though it seem a digression, that in the mode of conducting our public ministrations, we are, perhaps, too formal and mechanical; that in the distribution of the matter of our sermons, we indulge too little variety, and exposing our plan in all its parts, abate the edge of curiosity, by enabling the hearer to anticipate what we intend to advance. Why should that force which surprise gives to every emotion, derived from just and affecting sentiments, be banished from the pulpit, when it is found of such moment in every other kind of public address? I cannot but imagine the first preachers of the gospel appeared before their audience with a more free and unfettered air, than is consistent with the narrow trammels to which in these latter ages, discourses from the pulpit are confined. The sublime emotions with which they were fraught, would have rendered them impatient of such restrictions; nor could they suffer the impetuous stream of argument, expostulation, and pathos, to be weakened, by diverting it into the artificial reservoirs, prepared in the heads and particulars of a modern sermon. Method, we are aware, is an essential ingredient in every discourse designed for the instruction of mankind, but it ought never to force itself on

the attention as an object apart; never appear to be an end, instead of an instrument; or beget a suspicion of the sentiments being introduced for the sake of the method, not the method for the sentiments. Let the experiment be tried on some of the best specimens of ancient eloquence; let an oration of Cicero or Demosthenes be stretched upon a Procrustes' bed of this sort, and if I am not greatly mistaken, the flame and enthusiasm which have excited admiration in all ages, will instantly evaporate: yet no one perceives a want of method in these immortal compositions, nor can any thing be conceived more remote from incoherent rhapsody.

"To return to the subject: whatever the mode of address, or whatever the choice of topics, there are two qualities inseparable from religious instruction; these are *seriousness* and *affection.* In the most awful denunciations of the divine displeasure, an air of unaffected tenderness should be preserved, that while with unsparing fidelity we declare the whole counsel of God, it may appear we are actuated by a genuine spirit of compassion. A hard and unfeeling manner of denouncing the threatenings of the word of God, is not only barbarous and inhuman, but calculated, by inspiring disgust, to rob them of all their efficacy. If the awful part of our message, which may be styled the burden of the Lord, ever fall with due weight on our hearers, it will be when

it is delivered with a trembling hand and faultering lips ; and we may then expect them to realize its solemn import, when they perceive that we ourselves are ready to sink under it. 'Of whom I have told you before,' said St. Paul, 'and now tell you *weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' What force does that affecting declaration derive from these tears ! An affectionate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments and follow the impulse of the speaker. Whoever has attended to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of their impression depends upon this quality, which gives to sentiments comparatively trite, a power over the mind beyond what the most striking and original conceptions possess without it.

"Near akin to this, and not inferior in importance, is the second quality we mentioned, *seriousness.* It is scarcely necessary to remark, how offensive and unnatural is every violation of it in a religious discourse, which is, however, of wider extent than is generally imagined, including not merely jesting, buffoonery, and undisguised levity of every sort, but also whatsoever in composition or manner, is inconsistent with the supposition of the speaker being deeply in earnest; such as sparkling ornaments, far-fetched images, and that exuberance of flowers which seems evi-

dently designed to gratify the fancy, rather than to touch the heart. When St. Paul recommends to Timothy that 'sound speech which cannot be condemned,' it is probable he refers as much to the propriety of the vehicle, as to the purity of the instruction. There is, permit me to remind you, a sober dignity, both of language and of sentiment, suited to the representations of religion in all its variety of topics, from which the inspired writers never depart, and which it will be our wisdom to imitate. In describing the pleasures of devotion, or the joys of heaven, there is nothing weak, sickly, or effeminate: a chaste severity pervades their delineations, and whatever they say appears to emanate from a serious mind, accustomed to the contemplation of great objects, without ever sinking under them from imbecility, or attempting to supply a deficiency of interest, by puerile exaggerations and feeble ornaments. The exquisite propriety of their representations is chiefly to be ascribed to their habitual seriousness; and the latter to their seeing things as they are.

"Having touched on the principal difficulties attending the *public* exercise of the ministry, it may be expected something will be said on his more private functions. To affirm it to be the duty of a pastor to visit his people *often*, is, perhaps, affirming too much; the more frequently he converses with them, however, provided his

conversation be properly conducted, the more will his person be endeared, and his ministry acceptable. The seasonable introduction of religious topics is often of such admirable use, that there are few qualities more enviable than the talent of teaching from house to house: though the modern state of manners, I am aware, has rendered this branch of the pastoral office much more difficult than in former times. In a country village, where there is more simplicity, less dissipation, and less hurry of business than in large towns, prudent exertions in this kind may be considered as eminently proper and beneficial. The extent to which they should be carried must be determined by circumstances, without attempting to prescribe any other rule than this, that the conversation of a Christian minister should be always such as is adapted to strengthen, not impair, the impression of his public instructions. Though it is not necessary, nor expedient, for him to be always conversing on the subject of religion, his conversation should invariably have a religious tendency: that whatever excursions he indulges, the return to serious topics may be easy and natural. The whole caste of his character should be such as is adapted to give weight to the exercise of his ministerial functions. On the peculiar force with which the obligations of virtue attach to a Christian teacher, the purity and correctness of your own conduct, while it

would embolden me to speak with the greater freedom, make it less necessary for me to insist. You are aware that moral delinquency in *him*, produces a sensation as when an armour-bearer fainteth; that he can neither stand nor fall by himself; and that it is impossible for him to deviate essentially from the path of rectitude, without incurring the guilt and infamy of Jeroboam, who is never mentioned but to be stigmatized as he 'who taught Israel to sin.' 'Be thou an ensample to the flock in faith, in purity, in conversation, in doctrine, in charity.' Instead of satisfying ourselves in the acquisition of virtue with the attainments of a learner, we must aspire to the perfection of a master; and give to our conduct the correctness of a pattern. We are called to such a conquest over the world, and such an exhibition of the spirit of Christ, as shall not merely exempt us from censure, but excite to emulation, 'Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world,' said our Saviour to his disciples, whom he was about to send forth in the character of public teachers. As persons to whom the conduct of souls is committed, we cannot make a wrong step without endangering the interests of others; so that if we neglect to take our soundings, and inspect our chart, ours is the misconduct of the pilot, who is denied the privilege of perishing alone. The immoral conduct of a Christian minister is little less than a public tri-

umph over the religion he inculcates: and when we recollect the frailty of our nature, the snares to which we are exposed, and the wiles of our adversary, who will proportion his efforts to the advantages resulting from his success, we must be aware how much the necessity of maintaining an exemplary conduct adds to the difficulty of the ministerial function.

"When we inculcate, with so much earnestness, an attention to the mind of Christ, as exhibited in the scriptures, let us not be understood to exclude his precepts, or to countenance, for a moment, the too frequent neglect of Christian morality. While you delight in displaying the riches of divine grace, conspicuous in the work of redemption, as the grand motive to love and trust in the Redeemer, you will not forget frequently to admonish your hearers, that he only 'loveth him who keepeth his sayings;' the illustration of which, in their bearings upon the different relations and circumstances of life, will form, if you follow the apostolic example, a most important branch of your ministry. Not content with committing the obligation of morality to the arbitration of feeling, much less with faintly hinting at it, as an obvious inference from orthodox doctrine, you will illustrate its principles with an energy, a copiousness, a fulness of detail, proportioned to its acknowledged importance. You will not be silent on the precepts, from an ap-

prehension of infringing on the freedom of the gospel, nor sink the character of the legislator in that of the Saviour of the church. A morality, more elevated and pure than is to be met with in the pages of Seneca or Epictetus, will breathe through your sermons, founded on a basis, which every understanding can comprehend, and enforced by sanctions, which nothing but the utmost stupidity can despise—a morality of which the love of God, and a devoted attachment to the Redeemer, are the plastic soul, which, pervading every limb, and expressing itself in every lineament of the new creature, gives it a beauty all its own. As it is the genuine fruit of just and affecting views of divine truth, you will never sever it from its parent stock, nor indulge the fruitless hope of leading men to holiness, without strongly imbuing them with the spirit of the gospel. Truth and holiness are, in the Christian system, so intimately allied, that the warm and faithful inculcation of the one, lays the only foundation for the other. For the *illustration* of particular branches of morals, we may consult Pagan writers on ethics with advantage; but in search of *principles*, it is at our peril that we desert the school of Christ: since we are complete in him, and all the moral excellence to which we can aspire is but Christianity embodied; or, if we may be allowed to change the figure, the impress of the gospel upon the heart.

"Let me earnestly intreat you, by keeping close to the fountain of grace, to secure a large measure of its influence in your private studies, and in your public performances, remember your absolute dependence on superior aid; let your conviction of this dependence become so deep and practical, as to prevent your attempting any thing in your own strength, after the example of St. Paul, who, when he had occasion to advert to his labours in the gospel, checks himself by adding, with ineffable modesty, 'yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' From that vivid perception of truth, that full assurance of faith, which is its inseparable attendant, you will derive unspeakable advantage in addressing your hearers; a seriousness, tenderness, and majesty, will pervade your discourses, beyond what the greatest, unassisted talent can command. In the choice of your subjects, it will lead you to what is most solid and useful, while it enables you to handle them in a manner the most efficacious and impressive. Possessed of this celestial unction, you will not be under the temptation of neglecting a plain gospel, in quest of amusing speculations or unprofitable novelties: the most ordinary topics will open themselves with a freshness and interest, as though you had never considered them before; and *the things of the Spirit* will display their inexhaustible variety and depth. You will pierce the invisible world; you will look,

so to speak, into eternity, and present the essence and core of religion, while too many preachers, for want of spiritual discernment, rest satisfied with the surface and the shell. It will not allow us to throw one grain of incense on the altar of vanity; it will make us forget ourselves so completely, as to convince our hearers we do so; and displacing every thing else from the attention, leave nothing to be felt, or thought of, but the majesty of truth, and the realities of eternity.

"In proportion to the degree in which you possess this sacred influence, will be the earnestness with which you implore it in behalf of your hearers. Often 'will you bow the knee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he will grant unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance among them that believe.'

"Here alone is certainty and durability; for, however highly we may esteem the arts and sciences, which polish our species and promote the welfare of society; whatever reverence we may feel, and ought to feel, for those laws and institutions whence it derives the security necessary for enabling it to enlarge its resources and develop its energies, we cannot forget that these are but the embellishments of a scene we

must shortly quit,—the decorations of a theatre from which the eager spectators and applauded actors must soon retire. 'The end of all things is at hand.' Vanity is inscribed on every earthly pursuit, on all sublunary labour; its materials, its instruments, and its objects, will alike perish. An incurable taint of mortality has seized upon, and will consume them ere long. The acquisitions derived from religion, the graces of a renovated mind, are alone permanent. This is the mystic enclosure, rescued from the empire of change and death; this the field which the Lord has blessed: and this word of the kingdom, the seed which alone produces immortal fruit, the very bread of life, with which, under a higher economy, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, will feed his flock and replenish his elect, through eternal ages. How high and awful a function is that which proposes to establish in the soul an interior dominion—to illuminate its powers by a celestial light—and introduce it to an intimate, ineffable, and unchanging alliance with the Father of Spirits! What an honour to be employed as the instrument of conducting that mysterious process by which men are born of God; to expel from the heart the venom of the old serpent; to purge the conscience from invisible stains of guilt; to release the passions from the bondage of corruption, and invite them to soar aloft into the regions of uncreated light and beau-

ty; 'to say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves!' These are the fruits which arise from the successful discharge of the Christian ministry: these the effects of the gospel, wherever it becomes the power of God unto salvation: and the interests which they create, the joy which they diffuse, are felt in other worlds.

"One consideration arising from the view we have taken of the ministerial office, respects the advantages possessed by the Christian minister for the cultivation of personal piety.—'Blessed is the man,' said the royal Psalmist, 'whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee: blessed are they who dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee.' If he was so strongly impressed with a conviction of the high privilege annexed to the priesthood, by virtue of its being allowed a nearer approach to God, in the services of the sanctuary, the situation of a Christian minister is not less distinguished, nor less desirable. It is the only one in which our general calling as Christians, and our particular calling as men, perfectly coincide. In a life occupied in actions that terminate in the present moment, and in cares and pursuits extremely disproportionate to the dignity of our nature, but rendered necessary by the imperfection of our state, it is but little of their time that the greater part of mankind can devote to the direct and immediate pursuit of their eternal interests.

A few remnants, snatched from the business of life, is all that most can bestow. In our profession, the full force and vigour of the mind may be exerted on that which will employ it for ever; on *religion*, the final centre of repose; the goal to which all things tend, which gives to time all its importance, to eternity all its glory; apart from which man is a shadow, his very existence a riddle, and the stupendous scenes which surround him, as incoherent and unmeaning as the leaves which the Sybil scattered in the wind. Our inaptitude to be affected in any measure proportioned to the intrinsic value of the interest in which we are concerned, and the objects with which we are conversant, is partly to be ascribed to the corruption of nature, partly to the limitation of our faculties. As far as this disproportion is capable of being corrected, the pursuits connected with our office are unquestionably best adapted to that purpose, by closely fixing the attention on objects which can never be contemned, but in consequence of being forgotten; nor ever surveyed with attention, without filling the whole sphere of vision. Though the scene of our labour is on earth, the things to which it relates subsist in eternity. We can give no account of our office, much less discharge any branch of it with propriety and effect, without adverting to a future state of being; while in a happy exemption from the tumultuous cares of life, our only concern with mankind, as far as it respects our

official character, is to promote their everlasting welfare; our only business on earth, the very same that employs those exalted spirits, who are sent forth on embassies of mercy, 'to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Our duties and pursuits are distinguished from all others by their immediate relation to the ultimate end of human existence; so that while secular employments can be rendered innocent only by an extreme care to avoid the pollutions which they are so liable to contract, the ministerial functions bear an indelible impress of sanctity. How much of heaven is naturally connected with an office whose sole purpose is to conduct man thither! and what a superiority to the love of the world may be expected from men who are appointed to publish that dispensation which reveals its dangers, detects its vanity, rebukes its disorders, and foretells its destruction!

"Men are ruined in their eternal interests by living as though they were their own, and neglecting to realize the certainty of a future account. But it must surely require no small effort to divert our attention from this truth, who have not only the same interest in it with others, but in consequence of the care of souls, possess a responsibility of a distinct and awful character; since not one of those to whom that care extends, can fall short of salvation through our neglect or default, but 'his blood will be required at our hands.'"

APPENDIX.

THE following Extracts from Observations suggested to the attention of a minister at his ordination, are quite in accordance with the general design of this volume, and, on this account, they are inserted in the conclusion of it.

——————If I can recall to your recollection and my own, as well as that of our brethren in the ministry who are present, some considerations calculated to excite us all to increased zeal and activity in the service of our divine master, our meeting on this interesting occasion will not be in vain.

First, then, let all of us who are engaged in this work, recollect the great importance of keeping our eye steadily fixed on the state of our own souls, and of seeing that they be in a state of spiritual prosperity before God. I trust we all have the testimony of our consciences that we do indeed believe those great truths we preach to others. But it ought to be the object of our incessant solicitude, not only to believe them in general, but deeply to *feel* them, and to live under their lively experimental and practical influence. It will very generally be found, that in proportion as we discover, in our conduct, the influence of the truths we preach, will

we be disposed to press them with earnestness and pungency on the hearts and consciences of our hearers; and it is when thus addressed that, through the divine influence, we can look for much success. Those who have been honoured with extensive usefulness in the Christian church, have usually been distinguished by that peculiar earnestness of address which arises from powerful realizing views of the great things of eternity. I may here refer, as an illustration of this remark, to that eminent servant of God, the late *George Whitefield.* He lived, indeed, before our period, but we have heard from those who were well acquainted with him, and often sat under his ministry, that, in addition to his natural eloquence, (which was unquestionably great,) there was such a lively impression of eternal things manifestly on his own soul, as deeply affected the minds of his hearers. He spoke as one who had the future world, amidst all its dread solemnities, immediately in his eye.

Again, In our general preaching, it is of much importance to select the most useful topics, by which I mean those that refer to the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity. You will not suppose that this remark implies that we should keep back any part of the counsel of God. No; we are bound to inquire what that counsel is, and, so far as we discover it, to make it known. But whatever attention may be occasionally paid to other topics, when a promiscuous mass are assembled before us on the Lord's day, we conceive it of great moment to dwell on such essential truths as the depravity of man—the deceitfulness of the heart—the way of being reconciled to God—the necessity of the renewing efficacy of the spirit of God—of a life of holiness, and of being prepared for that eternal world that

lies before us. One manifest advantage of giving a distinguished prominence to such subjects is, that, to the careless part of the audience, (and we should in general calculate on many of our hearers being of this description,) these are topics which are most immediately and vitally interesting. But may I not add, that they are also most edifying to Christians themselves? Yes; they need to be reminded of those truths which they already know. And suppose one who belongs to a different denomination of professing Christians, and who is thus, perhaps, prejudiced against you, should come to hear you, by dwelling on such truths, you silence his criticisms, and disarm him of his prejudices. He is for the time forced to forget them. If his soul is affected with impressive views of the evil of sin; if such an exhibition is presented to him of the deceitfulness of the heart as inspires him with greater watchfulness; if his spirit is refreshed with an animating representation of the Saviour's love, he will retire from the house of God impressed and edified, and be constrained to say, — "Well, after all this is the right way of preaching. This is the preaching which I am convinced is fitted to do good." I should not envy the tone of mind of that hearer who could be employed in reflecting on the particular class to which the preacher belonged, when he heard the great fundamental truths of Christianity faithfully expounded and affectionately enforced. And I should consider that man as having most effectually attained the end of preaching, who constrained his hearer to forget every thing else except the way in which he was personally affected by the great and interesting truths that were brought before him. That preacher is most successful by whose labours the hearer,

when he retires from the house of God, finds that he has too much to do *at home*—too much to do *within*—too much to do in his *closet*, to think of any thing else. That preacher certainly attains most effectually the end of preaching, who most completely succeeds in concealing himself behind that blaze of divine truth which he pours on an aroused and attentive auditory.

It is unquestionably our duty to place divine truth in as powerful a light as possible; in short, to preach as well as we can. I mention this, because if a man has such a talent for public speaking as enables him to go through his work decently and respectably without much preparation, he is under a strong temptation to trust to it, and thus to state divine truth in a much less impressive manner than by proper study and attention he is capable of doing. Let us guard against this temptation. Let us recollect that there is only a limited number of opportunities we shall have of calling the attention of our hearers to the momentous concerns of eternity. The hour is already fixed in the councils of heaven when every one of us shall deliver his last sermon, and when his opportunities of usefulness on earth will be for ever over. Let us improve them to the utmost then while they continue. If I could do more to promote the spiritual good of my hearers and omit it, to me it is sin. Let none say this is laying inordinate stress on means, and not looking sufficiently to the divine blessing. Far from it. We all admit that God works by means; and hence we should use them. But if we use them at all, then we should certainly employ those most fitted to attain the end.

Need I add we must *preach by our lives?* A single hint here is sufficient. The manifest truth as well as

importance of this remark is such as needs no confirmation, and as little requires any lengthened illustration. We have all seen how little attention is excited by the most powerful appeal of a preacher, if his conduct shows that he is not living under the practical influence of the truth he proclaims, while nothing is more calculated than a steady and consistent character to secure a serious attention to those doctrines and admonitions which he addresses to the understandings and consciences of his brethren.

The apostle speaks of teaching publicly and *from house to house*. I cannot but consider this latter mode of promoting the influence of divine truth a most valuable addition to the former. It has even some advantages peculiar to itself. 1. You fix the attention of those you address more completely by the smallness of the number. What you say to the different members of a family at their own fireside, is much more likely to be attended to than what they hear only as a part of a numerous congregation. But, 2. It has also more the appearance of an expression of personal friendship. We all know how apt men are to say of our public preaching, that it is our business, our professional employment; that it is what we must do, as we are paid for it. But kindly visiting the members of our congregations, where it will be acceptable, in their respective families, from its not being so direct a part of our public duty, assumes more the aspect of personal regard. This practice also affords us an opportunity of inquiring into the circumstances of a family, and how far the members of it are discharging the duties of the situations they respectively occupy. Visiting a family, for example, will enable us to discover how far parents are

in the habit of teaching their children, which, if we were merely accustomed to address them in public, we could never discover.

This I should be disposed to follow up with *personal conversation*, so far as it is practicable, with all your regular hearers. I feel that I have a certain connexion with all who statedly sit under my ministry. They, by this act, so far show that they consider me capable of giving them instruction, while they are willing to come and receive it from me. I am bound then to do them all the good in my power. By a personal conversation you may learn where a difficulty presses them, and thus be able to remove it; or you may discover that part of divine truth of which they are most ignorant, and there communicate farther instruction, or you may find out where you yourself fail, in your public discourses, in making your meaning fully known, and thus be led to speak with greater perspicuity. Besides, I know nothing more calculated to impress the mind than a solemn and affecting admonition, given by a minister to a hearer, in private, seriously to consider the truths he is in the habit of hearing from the pulpit.

I have been so much impressed of late with the importance of this method of promoting the spiritual good of our hearers, that I should feel that I omitted an important duty this day, if I did not very particularly recommend it to your attention. It is well known that when men hear a discourse in public they are apt to escape in the crowd; and whatever earnestness you discover, if what you say is addressed to hundreds besides themselves, it is more easy to evade it than if it were spoken to them alone. Such is human nature, and every

thing connected with human nature ought to be carefully studied, if we would be faithful and successful ministers of Jesus Christ.

Here let me call upon you to judge for yourself. Suppose, when you were young, the minister you were accustomed to hear had requested you to call upon him, and when you were alone with him in his chamber, that he pointedly and affectionately reminded you of the necessity of laying to heart without delay the things that belong to your eternal peace—are you not fully convinced that such an address would have been far better recollected, and much more likely to impress your mind than many sermons? Now, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." It is a fair principle of calculation, that what was likely to impress yourself is not less likely to impress others. Most of men need something out of the common beaten track to rouse them from that melancholy apathy, in reference to eternal things, under which they labour; and it is proper to resort to every legitimate means by which this may be effected.

This method of usefulness which I am now recommending, was very extensively employed by that eminent and very successful minister of Christ, Richard Baxter. When he was in affliction particularly, (as he often was) he used to call upon his people to visit him in his chamber, and frequently addressed them with an urgency which they could not resist. It is remarked, too, in the life of Joseph Alleine, that after visiting for some time in a family, he used to ask the younger branches of it in particular to converse with him alone, before he left it, and seldom did they leave him with dry eyes, with so much earnestness and affection did he entreat them

to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life.

I have only to add, that it is but of late I have had recourse to this method of requesting those who usually sit under my ministry to call upon me individually, and from what I have seen of the attention which a direct personal address is calculated to excite, I deeply regret that I did not adopt it sooner. If I had done so, I think I might fairly have calculated on a much higher measure of usefulness in all human probability attending my ministry. Accept then of a hint suggested by some observation and experience ; and I trust, my dear brother, that you will be able to testify to others, from a far more enlarged experience than I have had, the very great utility of the method I now mention.

Before leaving this topic, I must just add, that this mode of usefulness is particularly calculated to awaken the attention of the *young*. The mind is, at this period of life, most susceptible, and it is peculiarly so of any expression of kindness. They present then a fine field of usefulness. Study assiduously to cultivate it. Frequently converse with them. Endeavour to engage their affection and confidence. Inquire into the progress they are making in knowledge. Mark the dawn of religious feelings in their minds. Do what you can to cherish these, and thus to strengthen the hands of parents in that most important of all employments, training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And let us at all times recollect of what incalculable importance it is both to themselves and to the cause of God in the world, that the minds of the youthful part of our congregations be deeply impressed with divine truth. They are soon to occupy the place

of the present generation, and to their exertions we must look for the vigorous prosecution of all those schemes which have of late been formed to diffuse the knowledge of pure religion in the age that is to follow.

When we recollect the apostle's description of the business of those who are placed in the pastoral office, is there not much reason to fear that the important duties connected with it are but very imperfectly understood, even by the most careful and conscientious among us? They are represented as *watching for souls as they that must give an account.* What a solemn engagement! What a high responsibility! How justly may we say, who is sufficient for these things! Souls are committed to our trust. They are in a world of danger. We are called with all possible fidelity to watch over them—to mark that danger—to sound the signal of alarm—to use every exertion to preserve them unhurt amidst the snares with which they are surrounded. Does not this require a minute acquaintance with the character, and temper, and circumstances of those under our pastoral care? One is in a situation, perhaps, exposed to imminent peril. This may arise from his calling in life, especially when taken in connexion with the particular cast of his mind. He thus needs more careful inspection than another. Let this inspection be given. One man is soft and pliable in his natural temper, another is rugged and stubborn—these are, of course, exposed to different kinds of evil. Is it not of importance that these peculiarities of temper be studied and known, that we may wisely and successfully adapt our admonitions to each? What a knowledge of the human character! What an acquaintance with the outward circumstances of our flocks! What an insight into the

deceitfulness of the heart!—into all its secret movements—all its doublings and windings—does successful pastoral watchfulness require? We are often in danger of resting satisfied, if on good evidence we receive a person as a member of the Christian church. But we should recollect that there is a new class of duties to such a person, on which we only then enter. A new relation is formed. This requires on our part incessant watchfulness, and this must continue as long as our pastoral relation to that individual subsists.

Here I cannot omit quoting one striking example of pastoral fidelity. It is mentioned in the Life of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, minister of Haworth, in Yorkshire, by the Rev. John Newton. I do not know where we can meet with a finer, or what I would call a more enviable example of great zeal for general usefulness, as well as true pastoral assiduity and watchfulness, than here. I shall give you Mr. Newton's own words.—"The last time I was with him, as we were standing together upon a hill near Haworth, and surveying the romantic prospect around us, he expressed himself to the following purport, and I believe I nearly retain his very words, for they made a deep impression upon me while he spoke. 'When I first came into this country, if I had gone half a day's journey on horseback towards the east, west, north, and south, I could not meet with or hear of one truly serious person—and now, through the blessing of God upon the poor services of the most unworthy of his ministers, besides a considerable number whom I have seen or known to have departed this life like Simeon, rejoicing in the Lord's salvation; and besides five dissenting churches or congregations, of which the ministers, and nearly every one of the members were first awakened under my ministry; I have still at my sacra-

ments, according to the weather, from three hundred to five hundred communicants, of the far greater part of whom, so far as man who cannot see the heart (and can therefore only determine by appearances, profession, and conduct) may judge, I can give almost as particular an account, as I can of myself. I know the state of their progress in religion. By my frequent visits and converse with them, I am acquainted with their several temptations, trials, and exercises, both personal and domestic, both spiritual and temporal, almost as intimately as if I had lived in their families.' A stranger who had stood upon the same spot, from whence he could see little but barren mountains and moors, would scarcely think this declaration credible. But I knew the man well, and of all the men I ever knew, I can think of no one who was less to be suspected of boasting than Mr. Grimshaw."—*Newton's Life of Grimshaw.* Pp. 85, 87.

What Christian minister would not rather wish at a dying hour to have the testimony of his conscience, that he had thus watched for the souls of his flock, than that he had been distinguished as the first historian, philosopher, or even preacher of his day? We may reasonably look for much prosperity to the churches of Christ, when a large supply of such faithful pastors is to be found among them.—May the Lord of the vineyard send forth many such labourers into his vineyard!

While in this world of imperfection Christians are divided into various denominations, I trust you will ever guard against that spirit which would prevent you from cordially rejoicing in all the good that is done by others, or dispose you to look with a jaundiced eye on the excellencies that appear in their characters. We shall all find much to esteem, to love, and to imitate in many,

from whom, on some subjects, we are constrained to differ. But never let any difference, on comparatively minor points, prevent us from contemplating with complacency and delight, the image of our Divine Master wherever it is to be found.

In the discharge of our duty it is of much importance that we should live *superior to the opinion of the world,* and that we should not be surprised if our conduct and motives are frequently misrepresented. Some, indeed, would view it as a deplorable mark of character to be indifferent to public opinion, and we doubt not that a regard to that opinion where men are not influenced by a higher rule, has frequently a most beneficial effect. It may deter from crimes, which, but for the influence of such a sentiment, many would commit. But a *Christian has a higher rule.* He is in all things to walk so as to please God. In doing so he ever will act in such a way that the world *ought* to approve ;—and while he follows such a rule, if they do not, whether it be right to please men or God, judge you. It is indeed a small matter to be judged of man's judgment. But what a rich source of solid comfort, and of the purest enjoyment is it, to have the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, we have our conversation in the world.

While I have referred to the arduous nature of the work in which you are engaged, permit me, in the conclusion, just to hint at some sources of encouragement. 1. Let us recollect the gracious promise of divine aid. We are not sent a warfare on our own charges ; if we are faithful as the servants of the best of masters, all the grace we need he has promised to bestow. What a delightful thought, that the throne of mercy is ever open

to us, that we are at all times invited to come for direction amidst all our difficulties for support under every trial, for mercy to pardon, and grace to help us in every time of need. Again, though you may not have all the success you desire in preaching the gospel in this place, a certain measure of success you may confidently expect, "my word shall not return unto me void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Think then for your encouragement, what an immensely important object is accomplished, if but one soul is brought to the Saviour. An object is in this case attained infinitely more valuable than the wealth of worlds. But I trust, through the blessing of the eternal God, you shall have not one only, but many for your crown of rejoicing at the resurrection of the just.

You are now, my brother, in the prime of life, and enjoy the full vigour of health, see that you improve this blessing for promoting the glory of God, and the eternal welfare of souls. I can recollect the time when I enjoyed similar strength for labour, and at that period I could no more have formed any just idea of what is implied in the feebleness and diminished capacity of exertion incident to more advanced age, than I could of the existence of the separate state. This state of diminished capability for labour can only be understood from personal experience; but you cannot doubt, that whatever is implied in it, if your life is continued, such a state must come, and then you will feel a regret, of which, at present, you can form no adequate conception, that the days of health and vigour were not more fully devoted to God. Learn in time from the experience of others. Double your diligence while the capacity of vigorous and persevering exertion continues. Work the machine to

the full stretch of its power, that if you are spared to descend into the vale of years, you may not have occasion for the overwhelming reflection, that much has been left undone which you might have done; and that through your remissness, indolence, or want of watchfulness, many opportunities of promoting the glory of God and the good of souls, have been allowed to pass unimproved, which can never return.

In fine,—Let all of us who are engaged in the important work of preaching the gospel, study to keep our eye steadily fixed on the great day of account: if so, what manner of persons *will* we be in all holy conversation and godliness? Let us strive to occupy with fidelity every talent of usefulness with which we are intrusted; especially let us study to employ time to the very best advantage as it passes over our heads. Oh! how many opportunities of doing good do we let slip, which greater watchfulness would lead us to improve! I have often thought if we were laid for months on the bed of sickness, unable to engage in any exertion of active usefulness, how would we look back with regret to the very imperfect use we had made of the blessing of health while it was enjoyed. Let us prize health as a means of usefulness—let us work while it is called to-day—let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth more easily beset us, and as the racer increases his speed, the nearer he approaches the goal, let every Christian, especially every Christian minister, double his diligence the nearer he approaches the time when he must give an account of his stewardship. Let us labour with a constantly increasing zeal, animated by the hope that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

FINIS.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 076 407 9